

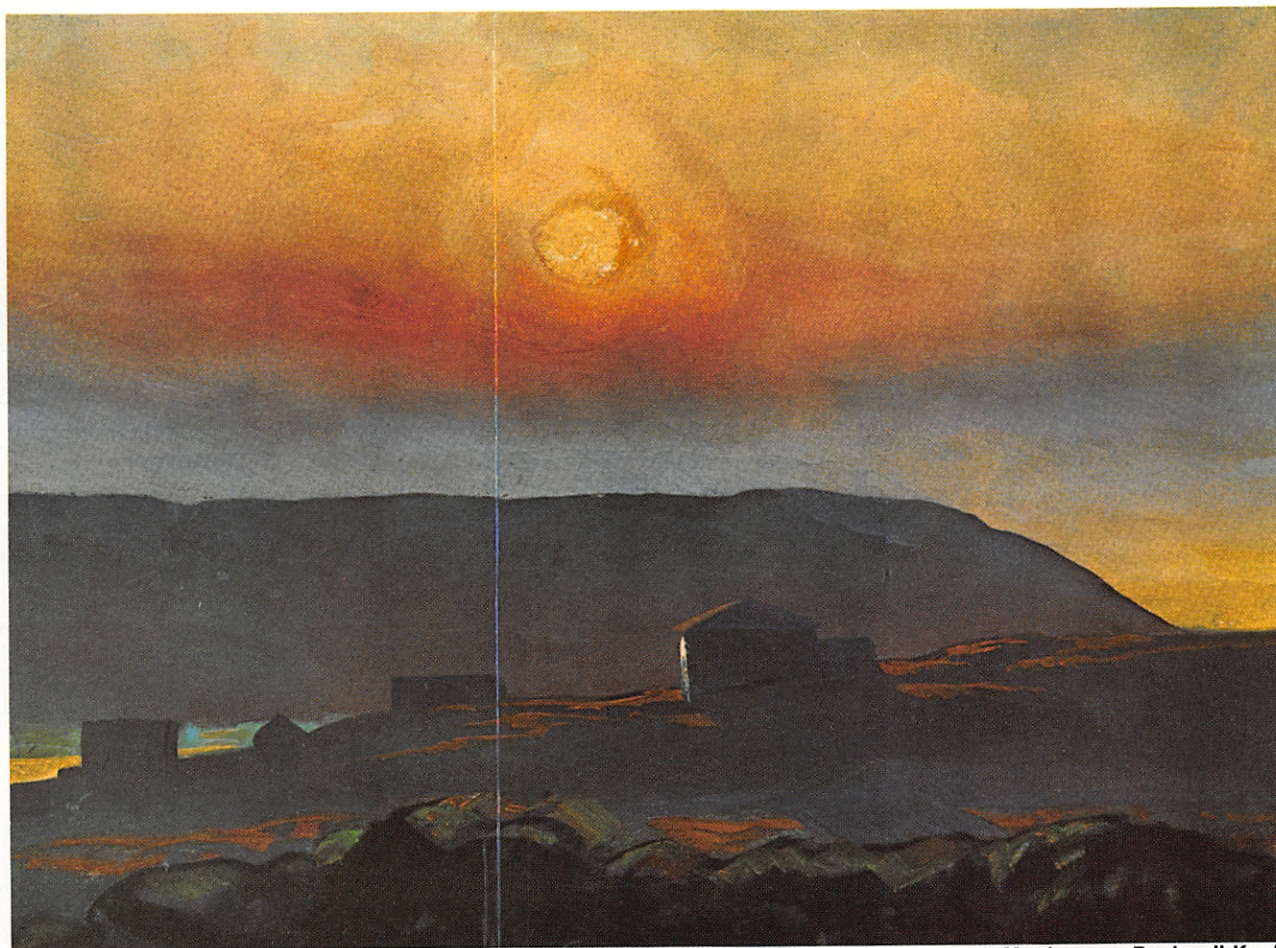
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# Bitter Sweet

WESTERN MAINE  
PERSPECTIVES

OCTOBER NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY ONE

VOLUME FOUR, NUMBER TEN



Sunset, Monhegan Rockwell Kent

**Paul Fortin: Lewiston Photomaker**

**Apple Cider Press**

**Autumn Mountain Hikes**

**The '47 Fires In Hiram & Brownfield**

**Update on Arthritis**

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**Rockwell Kent: Mainstreams In Art**

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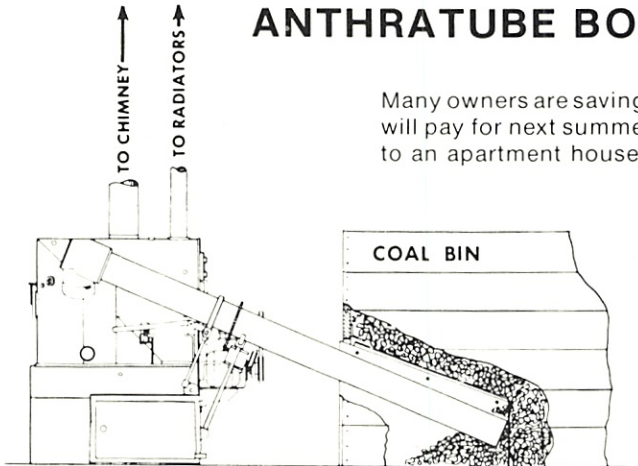
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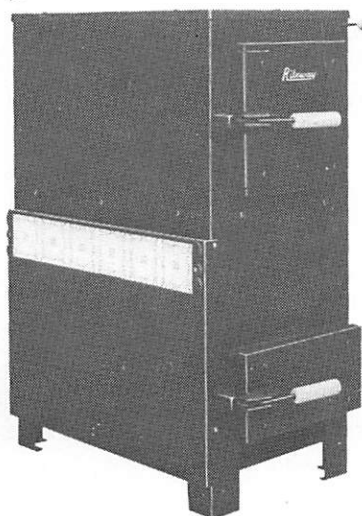
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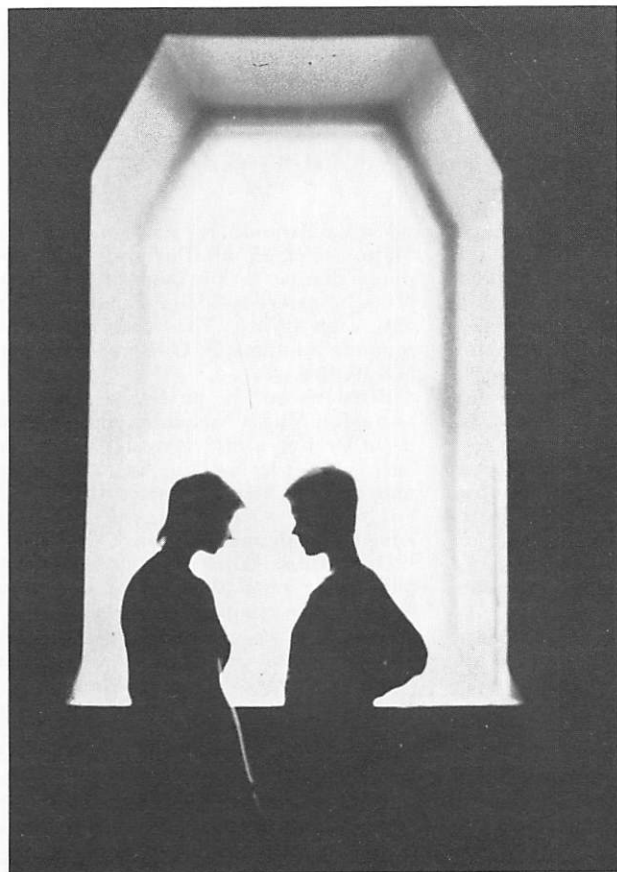
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Paul Rene Fortin:  
Les Soeurs

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## CREDITS

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# Bitter Sweet Views

There are many words in our language which are abused and over-used. Beautiful is one—saying full of beauty but seldom meaning it. We are bringing you in this issue examples of work which are *truly* beauty-full. Each element of the photographs of Paul Fortin and the work of the late Rockwell Kent, painter and printmaker, was deliberately placed to make a complete image: each shape, each line, each light and dark area have been created for a reason and as a part of a whole. Each artist forms a concept and strives to communicate it—in the case of Fortin with delicate, evocative imagery, and for Kent with bold, energetic statements.

Each writer or poet in this issue also puts words together to communicate an idea or describe an image. We think you'll like them. Write and tell us.

Regularly now, work flows into our office and we're glad to have it. We hope you all understand that, as publishing a magazine is a slow process, and as space and staff are limited, it may take some

time before you see your submission in print. Don't be discouraged about that—keep sending in your ideas.

*Nancy Marcotte*

**We've Moved:** Our new office is at 15 Main Street, South Paris and the new phone number is 207/743-9005. The usual office hours are 10-3 Mon.-Fri., but if we're out, keep trying. The mailing address remains the same: P. O. Box 6, Norway ME 04268.

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## Paul Fortin: Photomaker

Most of us *take* photographs. We line people and tell them to "smile, one, two, three."

A few among us, however, *make* photographs. These are the ones who have earned the right to be called photographers.

Paul Fortin of Lewiston is one such artist. He is an accomplished photographer whose work is full of mystery and romance.

Paul is known for his pastel coloring of photos. This technique, coupled with ample use of gossamer cloths, scrims, and special lenses, lends an old-fashioned evocative air to his work.

"Photography is like the theatre," says Paul. "You manage the setting, the costuming, the make-up, the blocking so that you get the effect you are striving for. An artist *makes* a photograph. I'm not interested in *taking* a photograph. I'm looking to play my fantasies out and that includes manipulating both the setting and the technique.

His photos show careful orchestration. A statue of a classical figure, a hand over her forehead as if to protect her eyes from blazing light, peers through the stencilling of a window of an antique shop (1). Whom has she searched for across the years as she has looked thus?

*Photos above: (1) Spiritual Guidance; (2) Staircase.*

A girl rests wearily by the newel of a staircase. Behind her is the dark-varnish wainscoting of a Lewiston apartment house (2). She holds a cast iron pot in her hand; has she just returned from the bakery with the family's Saturday-night beans?

A child, a girl, plucks absently, uninterestedly, at a violin (3). A photo with Quebec City in the background reveals a woman with a wind-blown veil over her face and hair (4). The ensemble is outrageous and yet it fits together, makes a plausible whole.

This is what Paul means when he says he "makes" a picture rather than takes one. It is, he says, what separates the artist from the snapshot photographer.

In his mid-thirties, Paul exhibits a flair for dress and person that marks the Latin temperament. His shoulder-length brown hair is well-groomed, showing signs of attention more in keeping with his Franco heritage than the negligence usually attributed to the artist. By choice an urban dweller, Paul walks everywhere, a long scarf usually wrapped about his neck.

His is a striking figure, but more striking even is his attitude, his determination to survive as an artist in his native environment, an environment which has not been overly supportive to the Muses.

*by Denis Sedoux*





*The Lesson, 1979*

*Foreign Affair, 1977*



"I always seem to come back to Lewiston. I've spent time elsewhere both here and in Europe, but I seem to come back."

He admits that "people don't understand in Lewiston" what he is trying to do.

"My photography is a tool for my self-expression. It's a precious gift that is available to me and I make use of it to know myself. It used to make me feel frustrated not to have an access to myself which photography provided."

He admits that the very concept of a tool for self-expression is perhaps foreign to most in the area. His reaction is not to give up, however, but to help share his gift so that others might learn from it to find their own.

Paul came to his art form in 1968 when a friend introduced him to photography. Paul was immediately captivated. After considerable personal study and experimentation, he decided to enter formal study and enrolled at the New York Institute of Photography where he studied in 1970-71. He also studied at the Rockport (Maine) Photographic Workshop. In yet another area, Paul studied photo-reportage in Paris, France. This mode of photography—denotative, analytical, intellectual—

is far from his own romanticism, but the study helped him, he says, to perceive, to develop a more just eye for photography.

Paul has been exhibited widely both in group and in one-man shows. He has been part of group shows across the country and in Europe. This has included shows at the Floating Foundation of Photography in NYC; the Focal Point Gallery in Madison, Wisconsin; and the Prisma Gallery of Perpignan, France. One-man shows in Maine were held at Craftschooll in Lewiston and at the Pinchpenny Gallery in Boothbay Harbor.

Publication has also come his way. Two books of poetry, *Love and Hate in America* and *Touch of Love* (1971), included his photography as did the book of poetry *Contemplations* (1976) by Lewiston poet Maurice Leblanc.

His photography has appeared also on book covers, in newspapers and magazines.

Paul's scope continues to expand: he is now venturing into the business world. Along with three others, Paul has opened a store/studio in Lewiston's Gateway Building. It is an attractive space with large windows opening onto one of the city's historic canals. Inside, *Magnum Opus* is spacious. The walls are partially-

exposed brick. Generally, it is a space which is more reminiscent of Portland's Exchange than of Lewiston.

"It's part of the New Lewiston," says Paul, who grew up here and attended both St. Dominic's and Lewiston High School. "It's time Portland people started coming up here to see what's going on. Lewiston isn't just a mill town anymore; it's a place where all sorts of good things are happening."

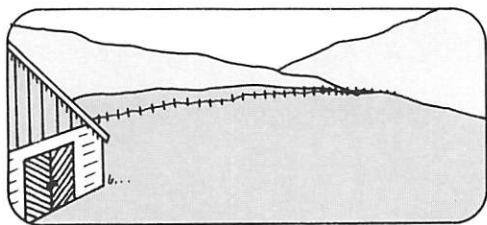
It is clear that Paul hopes *Magnum Opus* will be part of things. "We will try to fill some of the void created by the demise of Craftschooll, Lewiston's non-profit center for the arts which closed in July. We will sell supplies and artwork (ours and that of others on consignment) and run exhibitions. We hope *Magnum Opus* will become a community forum and that its for-profit status will enable it to survive."

In addition, Paul also freelances photography for weddings and special events and may be reached at *Magnum Opus*.

Along with LPL PLus APL, Lewiston Tomorrow, and the Franco-American Festival; Paul Fortin, because of his imagination, his determination, and his vision, is one other asset that the New Lewiston can be proud of.



*Paul Fortin, self-portrait*



# Thinking of Country Things

by John Meader

## Your Own Cider Mill

For something under twenty dollars, I built my own cider mill. Similar rigs I've seen advertised start around one hundred fifty and rise rapidly from there.

The trick to keeping the price so low is to scavenge. The frame of the mill that I made is constructed of scrap lumber, mostly two-by-four. The items that I had to purchase are these: three pieces of half-inch threaded rod, with nuts and washers; forty oak laths (from a mill that built lobster traps); and a dozen 3/8" lag bolts.

The basic units of the mill are these, going from bottom to top: a tray to catch the cider and let it spill into a pail; a basket made of oak laths to contain the ground apples while they are pressed; a jack to apply pressure to the ground-up apples; a reinforced arch against which the jack bears as pressure is applied; and a grinder. Apples are dropped into the hopper above the spinning grinder, and forced down onto its teeth with a sort of paddle which I fashioned from a piece of board to which a short chunk of broom handle is attached perpendicularly.

The overall dimensions are strictly based on practicality. I measured the pail that I intended to use to determine how high the tray should be above the floor. The basket is twenty-two inches high and fifteen inches square inside; large enough to hold the grindings from about three bushels of apples. The top of the grinder unit—the hopper—is about five feet above the floor. Any higher and one would have to stretch to use the paddle.

The grinder, a six-inch diameter birch cylinder into which many five-penny finish nails have been tapped, rides on a shaft. The shaft is 1/2" threaded rod. Attached to one end of the rod is a pulley head. A V-belt reaches to a similar pulley head on my garden tractor—the source of spin for

the grinder. A small electric motor would do just as well, or even better.

A few peculiarities and thoughts-to-keep-in-mind need mention. Cider contains acids and cannot be brought in contact with some metals. This precludes the use of galvanized metal. Plastic or porcelain-coated metals are required, or wood. I used rough boards for the tray. Since the tray must be cider-tight, I covered it with a left-over piece of laminate counter-top. Fitted wood would be best.

Secondly there's the matter of washing up. It's surprising how much water you need to make cider and I do not mean to stretch the product, you must believe me. Rather, cider-making is somewhat messy and all units of the mill have to be washed after pressing. To facilitate this, the grinder unit breaks down into two pieces, exposing the grinder-head and the under-skirt that directs the ground apple into the basket.

Pressure is critical. The more pressure, the more juice. I use an ordinary car jack/ A hydraulic jack would be easier to use. But the more pressure, the more strain that's placed on the arch.

The arch stands directly over the basket and the ground apples as pressing takes place. The apples are ground into burlap which is draped into the basket; a 15 x 15 x 2" piece of wood sits on top of the burlap-contained apples when pressing is to commence; the jack is situated between this block and the arch.

The arch that I came up with uses a piece of 1 x 2" oak on top of which lie three lengths of 1/4" flat steel, one on top of the other, so that I have an inch of oak and 3/4" of steel. And this is none too much. Threaded rod passes through the top layer of steel down to a two-by-four under the tray. Lag bolts are used in the obvious strain points. Otherwise, I used nails.

The grinder unit is the difficult part. Ideally one should search out a used mandrel from a saw or a bench-grinder, and attach the apple grinder,

the wooden cylinder, to this. I couldn't find a mandrel and had to resort to threaded rod. The rod runs through the cylinder which is held in place on the rod with washers set up with nuts. And then the rod runs through pipe with an interior diameter of 1/2". The pieces of pipe serve in place of bearings and bearing mounts. A little oil is occasionally dripped in to reduce friction. The two pieces of pipe are set into blocks of wood which attach to the wooden hopper and under-skirt. Stone simple, but it works, which is all a Yankee wants.

The wooden cylinder I took from a gray birch bole and shaped it down with a draw-knife. The birch eventually cracked as it dried. No problem. I filled the crack with glue and drove in wooden wedges. I then let the glue dry and shaved off excess wood.

Five penny finish nails are set into the cylinder until only 3/8" remains above the surface. The nails are an inch apart. As the cylinder turns, the nail heads miss the edge of the hopper by 1/8". This edge is covered with sheet aluminum. As the apples are pressed down into the paddle, they are chewed by the nail heads and eventually fall, or are thrown, in shreds into the burlap-lined basket. And, lo, pretty soon apple juice is trickling along the surface of the tray, and running into the pail. We're on our way.

That more or less disposes of the technicalities, putting us in a position to talk about the art rather than the engineering—apples and cider rather than nuts and bolts.

The apples are easily acquired, even if one has no trees. I bought drops at a dollar a bushel last year. The more important matter is which apples to seek when it comes to cider-making, for some apples are certainly preferable to others. And this leads us to the subject of human sensations, namely taste and smell.

It would seem that humans prefer the complex to the simple, or at least the mixed to the unmixed, when tastes and smells are involved. Something that is just plain sweet will cloy. Something simply sour puts one off. But if the something is both sweet and sour, and also offers a breath of aroma, why, we're enchanted—as with a fresh



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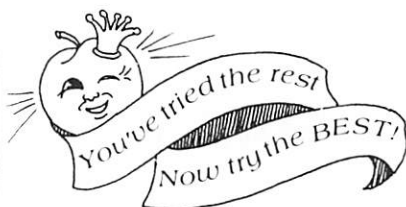
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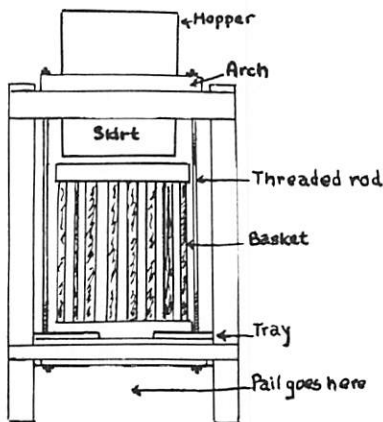


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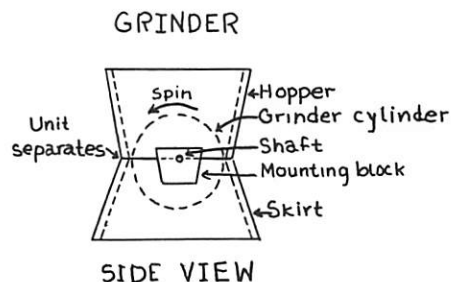
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FRONT VIEW



SIDE VIEW

strawberry, or some wines, or, yes, with good cider.

Good ciders accordingly contain a balance of sugars and acids; the best ciders offer aromatics as well. (Aromatics, I take it, are substances in food and drinks which we sense by smell rather than by taste-buds, and which enhance the "taste" of a substance.) Some apple varieties press out good cider by themselves, other varieties oftentimes want mixing.

A provision has to be noted. Any given variety of apple will vary markedly in its cider-value, depending on several factors. The most important factor is age of fruit. A fresh Mac will make pretty good cider; a Mac that's been on the ground for three or four weeks, particularly in a warm September, is poor stuff. The acids and aromatics will have broken down or cooked out. One has nothing left but weak sugar and water.

To my mind the two best cider apples raised locally are Wealthy and Northern Spy. A third good variety is Rhode Island Greening. I think these are worth looking for. They can still

be found in some of the older orchards although many have been cut down and replaced with apple varieties more popular for supermarket sales.

As for the other common varieties, Mac has been mentioned. Golden Delicious is very good early, but falls off quickly with age. The same may be said of Cortland. Cortland has a special aroma when it's relatively fresh. Red Delicious is never good by itself; it needs acids from other apple varieties. All of these are improved by mixing, particularly if Wealthy or Northern Spy are to be added.

The mixing is a matter of trial and error. No formulas exist. I go by the smell when I'm grinding. If it smells really good it will taste even better, I figure. The last pressing I made started off with some sweet early apples—Puritan, Melba. That wasn't very exciting. Things quickly improved when I switched to half-ripe Wealthy. It started to zing.

How much cider to hope for from a bushel of apples? Here again many factors are involved. The amount of juice in an apple is dependent upon rainfall, sunlight, soil fertility, condition of the tree, age of the apple, handling of the apple, and so on. Secondly, the size of the pressing contributes. Generally, large pressings are more productive per bushel than small ones. And thirdly, the power of the press obviously matters.

On my small press, I look for around two-and-a-half gallons per bushel. I'm sure this is on the low side for productivity. But questions of productivity fade faster than the autumn mists when you have your own cider to savor.

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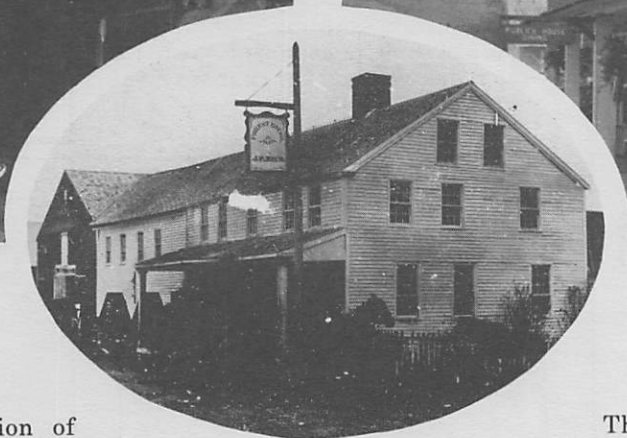
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Above: the interior and exterior of The Olde Rowley Inn as it is today.



Left: Taken from an old tintype—the inn as it looked in the mid-1800's as the Forest House



## Olde Rowley Inn

Amid the rush and tension of modern life, many of us yearn for the peace of an earlier day when there was greater opportunity to savor life and enjoy it. Quality was more important than speed. Friendships were more lasting than today's often-changing relationships. Work was hard and long, to be sure, but people took pride in what they did. Living and working closely together they grew to know each other well.

At the Olde Rowley Inn in North Waterford, Debra and Michael Lennon and Pamela and Peter Leja, escapees from the pressures of the business world, have set about to re-create the atmosphere of that less complicated time. The inn is an old stage-coach inn which in itself evokes a slower tempo. The house was built in about 1790. In 1825, John Rice, a stage coach driver, enlarged and opened it as the Forest House for travelers between Portland, the White Mountains, and Montreal. It was operated as an inn for many years and remained in the Rice family until 1940 when it was sold. Since then it has had many uses and has been partially restored.

The goal of the present owners is to provide excellent food and lodging in an atmosphere of relaxation and good fellowship. "We hope to make the inn very open to the community, a place for club meetings and family celebrations," says Michael. "We

don't usually serve luncheon, for instance, and are closed on Mondays, but we want to be flexible and are willing to arrange for special parties."

The building itself is well worth preserving. It is long and low, painted an authentic dark red. The door is decorated with stencils done by Debra of a pineapple, the logo of the place. The pineapple was the symbol of hospitality in early America. It appears in the inn on the dining room wallpaper, a design in bright blue and red reminiscent of old stencilling. Both the dining room and the living room retain the wainscoting and fireplaces of the original house. Peter, the carpenter, points out that many of the windows are hand-made with wooden pegs and old glass. From the hall a sidewinder staircase leads to the five guest rooms. These rooms are designated by the names of some of the area's well known men: Hannibal Hamlin, Artemus Ward, and John Rice, himself. Throughout the house, antiques and authentic reproductions enhance the early American flavor.

The food is carefully prepared and attractively served. It includes a variety of appetizers, soups, and entrées as well as such delicacies as Pamela's herb bread, honey sweet butter, and homemade pastries and ice cream. Debra and Pamela are assisted in the kitchen by Merle McAllister of North Waterford who contributes the meat and seafood entrees offered on the menu: *Chicken Veronique, Coquille St. Jacques, Veal Scallopini au Champagne*, among others.

Plans for the future include expansion of the dining facilities. Enlargement of the kitchen is already underway and when the work is completed the present serving area will become a small private dining room. The carriage house will also be converted to a dining room (making four in all).

"We are in no hurry, though," says Peter. "It will all take time."

The inn is well suited to the objectives of the innkeepers. One can imagine the cheer of evenings by the fire, the warmth of old pine, the soft light from tin lanterns. In this atmosphere reflecting the simplicity of the past, the friendliness and hospitality of the present owners makes itself felt.

Kate R. Gregg  
Harrison

New Photos by Richard Gregg





# DINING OUT



You will find listed here some of the finest—and most varied—places to eat out in western Maine and eastern New Hampshire. A beautiful drive out to view fall foliage will take you to any of them. Autumn's pleasant days and invigorating nights make a perfect time for exploring the high-ways and byways. On your way, eat here. (And tell them you saw it in BitterSweet!)



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# You Don't Say

## IT'S FALL

Count them yourself . . . the "just right" days of each season you can count on one hand.

The joy—the smell and feel of a New England fall can only be appreciated by those who have experienced it. My own temperature appraisal, born of many years, consists not only of looking at the thermometer on the back porch, but of a few deep inhalations thereon. This morning it was cold, but from my years of early morning testing, I knew today would be a rare one.

I awoke this morning to darkness—cold, for the first time this fall. By the time I had my window closed and turned on my electric blanket, I had to snuggle back briefly to wonder who had decided this was to be the first day of fall. Was it just one person's life span, when one could foretell that this was to be the first cold day and therefore a likely change of season? Or was it many people who, as I, had experienced this sudden change of body temperature and called it fall?

With the dawn came the birth of this special day; this bright-as-a-gem sparkling day!

Automatically I started making headway on my daily chores—not trivial, for this is part of living, but mundane, and the beauty and brisk air outside beckoned strongly.

When the announcer on the radio said that the visibility from Mt. Washington was over one hundred miles, I left the chores, which would, of course, wait.

So this "just right" day will be a part of me through the cold of winter and the heat of summer.

I have walked the perimeter of Mt. Agamenticus panoramically, viewing in all directions the mountains and the diminutive towns: Berwick, Kennebunkport, Ogunquit. I have seen Nubble Light, the glistening water, the first red maples. I have savored the delicious air while playing nine holes of golf. I have picked today's forced harvest of my tomato plants.

And so, like a squirrel, I will store away this day. Who knows when I may have another?

Olive Sherman  
York

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# A Crowning Achievement for KIM GREIG of HARTFORD



Miss Oxford County Fair, 1979



Kim Greig being presented a first-place pewter mug from K. C. Allen, President of American Angus Assoc. and Joe Williams, Maine Agriculture Commissioner

When still a tiny whisp of a girl, barely weighing sixty pounds, Kim Greig from Hartford, Maine, had her first steer named "Leonard"—A Black Angus beauty.

Oh, to remember that first show at Bangor Agricultural Fair! Leonard was shampooed, brushed, clipped, a "masterpiece" in the sight of Kim. He just *had* to be a winner. On the way to the ring, a "ticket-picker" (a person who picks up the cow manure leavings) passed her a four-leaf clover—another sign of a sure win, right?

Around the ring and around the ring went Kim, her show stick, a ten foot halter rope twisted a half a dozen times around her hand, and at the end of the rope an eight-hundred pound steer trying to walk gracefully. They were in first place, but the judge was not finished.

He asked, "Did you clip this animal by yourself?"

Kim at an honest age of eleven and so truthful, answered very meekly, "No."

Whoops! Leonard and Kim immediately dropped to third place. What heartache! The agony of defeat! However, this was a good learning experience and Kim decided this would be a good time to be self-sufficient!

Kim, a participant in 4-H, has found it extremely profitable and satisfying showing Black Angus

cattle. The necessity is for a lot of hard work and many hours preparing an animal for the ring; then "nerves of steel" to accept a second or third placing graciously, especially when those gold trophies and silver bowls glitter so brightly in the display

cabinet. Kim never hit the jackpot at Fryeburg Fair, but one of her steers was recognized as highly commended out of 100 steers—a feat worthy of pride.

For six years, Kim still showed her cows. In 1979, the Nezinscot School District (Buckfield) Girls Basketball Team for which Kim was the ball handler won the Maine State Championship. Wow! A gold basketball for the school and a personal gold basketball charm for her.

Only success abounded for Kim that year as she won the Miss Congeniality Award and was crowned Queen of Oxford County Fair.

Currently, Kim is a dental hygiene student at Forsyth in Boston; she will graduate in 1982.

Lorraine Leighton Greig  
Hartford

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Some of her trophies

# Young People's Writing

## College

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### FROZEN STREAM

The oil furnace trembled, rumbled, and settled into a steady hiss. Kirsty ignored it and blew on her fingers. Rats couldn't possibly survive this cold, she thought. She inspected her red hands and wondered about the possibility of frostbite and the subsequent amputation of all ten fingers. Deciding not to take any chances, she sat on her hands to warm them.

The steady hissing of the furnace died away. Kirsty sat in silence watching her breath faintly cloud and disappear. The packed earthen floor smelled musty and old. Kirsty had spent many afternoons in the cellar searching for a patch of looser dirt where bodies or treasures could have been buried. She had not located a spot yet, but had discovered, behind an ancient dresser, a shelf cluttered with dusty jars.

She had decided to ration them, and only open one a week. The first had been filled with hundreds of rusty nails, screws, and tacks. The second was more interesting. It contained a heap of dried-out insects. When she poked her finger in to retrieve a large brown grasshopper, it crumbled into powder. She slipped the insects onto a board and three beetles, a moth, and a cricket remained intact. She touched each and the bug instantly became dust.

Tomorrow was the third jar. Kirsty closed her eyes and the cold air crept in and surrounded her. She opened her eyes and felt warmer.

The cellar was growing darker. The one tiny window at this end of the room let in little enough light, and it was gray, covered with dust and cobwebs. Kirsty pulled her hands out from under her and rubbed off the dirt and bits of wood that had been pressed into them. She was sitting on a thick gray beam. It was pushed under the back wall and was half-covered with boxes, a pile of old clothes, and a torn baby bassinet. And probably, it occurred to her suddenly, it was the home of thousands of termites. She shuddered as she caught her breath and the oil furnace did the same and chugged back to life.

Cold drafts wormed into the room through the window cracks. There were thick beams supporting the low ceiling. Suddenly dust flew in the air, the cobwebs shivered. She heard thumping steps overhead. That would be her sister, Helen, she thought. Now she's going to the kitchen. Kirsty watched some water drops skip down the wall next to the furnace. Now she's crossing back to our room. Probably looking for me.

There was more thumping and the cellar door swung open. Bright light poured down the stairs but was cut off halfway by the angle of the walls, leaving the cellar dark.

"Kirsty?" Helen asked.

Kirsty waited a moment, then replied, "What?"

"Just what do you think you're doing down there? You can't be reading 'cause it's too dark."

Kirsty could imagine Helen's hands on her hips. She looked around the corner of the wall and saw a silhouette. She was right.

Kirsty thought of her jar of insect dust and smiled.

"Well, Helen, why don't you come down and find out?"

"Are you kidding? I'm not going down there with all the spiders and bugs and cobwebs and dirt. You're crazy. Mom!" Helen cried, "Kirsty won't come out of the cellar."

Kirsty heard heavy thumping.

"Kirsty, come up out of there, now!"

Kirsty stood and started up the stairs. Her hands were freezing anyway. Hopefully, frostbite had not set in.

Her mother stood at the top of the stairs, hands on hips, as well.

"What were you doing down there, Kirsty, if I may ask?"

"Just resting," Kirsty replied.

"Resting?" Her mother was pretending to be aghast. "But you haven't done anything to rest from. Your sister has been out skating all day."

"Yeah," Helen added, "and after skating we slid down the Ross's hill about nine, um, twenty times. Then it was too cold. I almost froze my ears off."

"Well it wasn't exactly the tropics in the cellar, you know."

"Well, you didn't have to stay down there," her mother said.

"Yeah, stupid," Helen giggled. "Who was making you?"

Pig, Kirsty thought, and stuck her tongue out.

"All right, enough," her mother interfered. "Helen, go and change, and Kirsty, you can just go out for a walk before supper."

"But Mom," Kirsty protested, "Helen just finished saying it was freezing out and she almost froze her ears off and you want me to go for a walk?"

Mom's face said yes. She pointed Helen to her door, Kirsty to the coat closet, and marched back to the kitchen. Kirsty scuffed across the carpet to the closet and started down the hall.

First, she fed the goldfish. She picked up the little box and sprinkled some in. All the fish attacked the food and swam rapidly about. I wonder, she thought, if I remembered to feed them yesterday. She dumped in a handful more. That'll keep them happy, she thought. She looked for her favorite one, Max, who had black spots on his tail. He was floating about in front of the horrible green and pink castle she'd bought for the fish.

Stupid fish, she thought. They swim around it, they swim over it, they swim in between the towers, but the idiot things refuse to swim in the door or windows like they are supposed to. What do they think is going to be in there? There are only seven fish and they all know each other; and three snails and some red rocks. You'd think they'd figure it out by now.

"Kirsty." Her mom appeared, hands on hips again.

"I'm going, Mom. I have to get my mittens."

Kirsty slammed the door behind her. It was freezing out. The street lights were on and the light glinted over the stretches of snow and ice. Kirsty crunched down the driveway. She spotted a long ice patch, ran carefully, and slid across it, arms outstretched for balance.

There was very little traffic tonight.



People never drove down this street when it was icy; they stuck to better plowed and sanded ones. Kirsty grabbed a handful of snow to eat. She headed down the center of the road, running and sliding across all the best ice patches she could find. She was heading for the wooden bridge.

Half a mile down the road, she turned down a path through the woods. The snow was up to her knees. Huge green trees shook snow down as she walked by. The woods were almost completely silent. Only the soft creak of weighted branches, the light siftings of snow, and her own crunching were to be heard. She came to bridge. Others had been here before her, but wind had blown snow over their path. The same wind had swept the boards of the bridge almost clear of snow. Ice was crusted over the boards and on the wire strands and supports. The evening's remaining light caught the ice and the bridge became a glittering web of bitter cold. Kirsty broke off an icicle and bit it. It tasted flatly of metal.

The bridge creaked with every step. The boards seemed brittle with cold. Kirsty slipped her hand from her mitten and pressed her face. It was cold and numb. There were ice particles frozen around her mouth. She licked them off, and more formed.

The brook gurgled darkly beneath the layers of snow and ice. Kirsty broke off icicles and sent them plummeting down to pierce the whiteness and then disappear. She kicked a pile of snow and watched in twinkle and vanish through the darkness.

The hidden stream was murmuring through the chill. She imagined the dark waters swirling over rocks and tapping the firm, smooth roof of the ice. Miniature ice floes would detach from the sides and spin and submerge, and spin again. Trapped branches would be propelled blindly through the cascading force, until they were jammed and slowly frozen still. Currents near the stream bed would send pebbles hopping and dancing past each other.

There was as a rustling behind her. A huge spruce tree shed its collection of snow and its branches sprang back into place. Kirsty started back across the bridge. Her mittens were stiff with melted and re-frozen snow.

This is a nice spot, she thought. She'd seen a patch of smooth snow. Stepping carefully, her feet as far apart as possible, she laid down, breaking through the crust

of snow. Arms and legs spread apart, she moved them back and forth. Considering it finished, she stood carefully and leapt away. There was a complete snow angel.

Perfect, she thought. Frozen, she slid all the way home.

*Melissa Stearns, Laconia, N.H.  
student, Bates College  
Prof. James Hepburn,  
Prof. John Tagliabue, advisors*

## LATE SUMMER WITH MY FATHER

We picked blueberries  
for three hours  
and it rained.  
But we stayed anyway;  
crouched close to the blue spotted  
ground that stretched and diffused  
into misty woods.  
You picked the first quart of berries.  
You always did.  
You taught me how to tell the difference  
between spruce and fir trees  
by squeezing the branches  
gently.  
You showed me where  
the cranberries would grow  
in the fall.  
You, so filled with awareness  
and silence  
in those woods that I welcomed  
your knowledge.  
And when the summer returns  
we will wait for the rain  
and go blueberrying together again.

## THE DEATH OF WORDS

I have not experienced the death  
of words  
as other poets have.

There have been no bloody battles  
between phrases  
in my neighborhood;  
no decaying, mindless poeticisms  
lying in my flower garden.  
None.

I have no flowers;  
no garden to drench  
with the blood  
of discarded thoughts.

The humid stench of death that rises  
from other poets' gardens  
is the experience of their failure;  
of wars between publishers  
and finer prophets.

I am still at war with myself;  
with my youth and innocence.  
But someday  
I, too, will have a flower garden  
running deep with the blood of my  
decaying poeticisms  
and dying words.

## ANALOGY FOR AUTUMN

Through my window I watch  
The days dapple down leaves.  
Autumn contradicts herself  
and bears the fruits of new life  
while stripping the trees dreary;  
leaving them abstract  
in linear half-line.  
Annual margins set between branches  
allow the light to stream graciously  
into my summer dusted rooms  
where time lingers like a bird  
ready to fly before the harvest.

## THUNDER FOR THE CHILDREN

The thunder prepared the day  
with a hidden weight  
and a haze that skimmed  
the edge of the forest.

Rain came after supper,  
giving us long warning  
from a sacred distance.

It washed the dusty flowers  
with finger-shaking silence.  
The garden steamed  
and the soil grew dark, rich  
and heavy again.

When we went to bed  
we went with fear.  
Creeping up the back stairway  
as if we were lost  
in the depths of a sinking ship.  
Afraid to breathe.  
Afraid to look into the darkness  
Of our rooms.

When Mother came in  
to tuck us in  
She told us to "thank God  
for this lovely rain."  
And without understanding why  
we slept.

## WALTZING . . . ALONE

Her press-powdered face  
pale as an eggshell  
smooth and cool  
seems at peace  
in the lamplight.  
Her thoughts  
are only memories now  
and they waltz  
like the flame of the lamp  
that sways  
under a shade of smoky glass  
and dusk.  
She sings  
in a voice that wavers  
and spreads through the night.  
A hymn sung  
to the distant church bells  
for her loneliness.  
She breaks the silence  
and rocks until dawn.

*Stephanie Butler, Kennebunk  
Ithaca College, New York*



# Fall Colors On Foot

God's Little Acre, Mount Tir'em; Mollyockett Mountain; Streaked Mountain

by Jane Chandler



View from the top of Mt. Tir'em



"God's Little Acre,"  
with Mac Bradley, Doug Trottier, Bill Hersey

On foot! What a great way to see the fall colors. Go on a short hike up any of the local mountains to really appreciate the autumn richness. Let's imagine going up to God's Little Acre on the top of Mount Tir'em in Waterford.

Fifty years ago, Mary Gage Rice gave one acre to the town of Waterford, one acre of Daniel Brown's land, to be used as a park for the townspeople. That sounds wonderful—but her acre was nearly inaccessible. For years local residents climbed up the mountain to enjoy the spectacular view from God's Little Acre, as the "park" was called. Then, in 1979, Ruth Rounds gave the land now used as a trail to the town in honor of her father and mother and brother, who had enjoyed the hike many times. It was her great-grandfather, Daniel Brown, who originally owned the mountain. Now everyone can enjoy the peaceful walk though the deciduous forest to the open top.

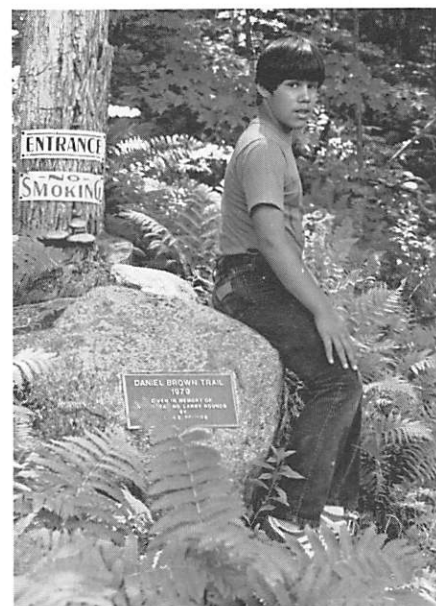
The entrance to the trail is not far from the Waterford Congregational Church in Waterford Flat. Park your car there and the trail leaves just a short way up the road on the left. It is well marked with a plaque and an entrance sign for the "Squire Brown Trail." The climb takes about an hour

at an easy pace. The top is a continuous granite boulder offering views in all directions. Keoka Lake, Long Lake, and Bear Mountain are nearby landmarks. Continuing around the granite top, one comes to a slab cave, a great place to cool off after a hot climb. The only discouraging feature is the damage done this year by gypsy moths.

Another nice hike is up Mollyockett Mountain in South Woodstock. This hike is through private property, so please be respectful while hiking. The steeper trail follows a logging/skidder trail that leaves a cemetery on the left, three-quarters of a mile on Koskela Road beyond the intersection of Perkins Valley Road with the road to South Woodstock. For a more gradual ascent, get permission from Larry Wilday or Shirley Koskela to park and follow the logging road one-half mile to where the trail turns right. In another one-eighth mile the path turns left to ascend to the granite boulder top. Again the view of fall leaves would be spectacular. With luck, you'll be the one to find Indian Princess Mollyockett's Pot of Gold buried somewhere in that mountain. I'm sure it's there. I've seen the rainbow end on this peak several times.

Streaked Mountain in Buckfield

offers another granite top with a maintained fire tower on top. Follow Rte. 117 from South Paris to Buckfield. Turn right on a tar road about 5 miles from Market Square. The trail leaves on the left at the power line and power cut. It ascends through the woods for the first half of



Mac Bradley at the entrance  
to the Mt. Tir'em trail in Waterford



## You Don't Say



### ROAD TO YESTERYEAR

I followed an old back road  
overhung with bushes and vines,  
for it led back to yesteryear,  
and echoed with hoofbeats of time.  
I passed by an old stone wall,  
A stump fence then came into sight,  
I heard the stone-drag and the haul,  
and the rocks being heaved with  
much might.

I saw an old house standing by,  
strong timbered but aged and gray.  
I heard a child's laughter inside,  
and a mother's voice singing so gay.  
I stood by a drooping barn door,  
and looked at the long empty mows,  
Heard a horse's soft whinny for oats,  
the imperative lowing of cows.  
I walked down the barnyard lane  
through the sagging pasture gate;  
There I heard a boy shouting,  
"Co, boss,"

Hurry up, the milking is late!  
A dog was barking nearby  
At a frog in the pond down below,  
the sun was fast setting and red,  
so I turned and decided to go.  
Then, I saw on top of the knoll,  
glowing pink 'neath the setting sun  
many headstones of varying size.  
I stepped closer to read every one.  
All were there in that weedy old plot  
resting, so peaceful, so calm;  
Yet it seemed their images lived—  
still worked, loved, and laughed on  
the farm.

As I turned and left the old place,  
I could hear the folks calling good-byes  
with smiles on their faces so dear;  
I waved gently, with tears in my eyes.

*Cora Thurston  
North Fryeburg*

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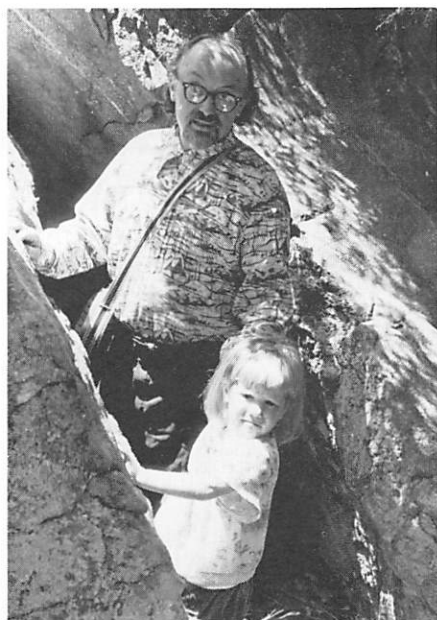
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*Doug Trotter and Becky Chandler  
at the entrance to the slab cave  
on the summit of Mt. Tir'em—  
a great place to cool off.*

the hike. Then it continues over  
exposed granite ledges. It is well  
marked with paint and not very steep.  
Streaked offers fine views with a 45-  
minute hike to the top and great  
blueberries the first week in August.

We live in one of the most beautiful  
places in the world. And it takes such  
a short time to get out and enjoy it.  
God's Little Acres are God's gift to us  
on the mountain peaks, allowing us to  
view His creation! Why not go out and  
enjoy them?



*(l. to r.) The author with her infant son  
Jeff, daughter Becky, and friend Larry  
Stewart—on top of Mollycokett Mt.,  
South Woodstock.*

**Do you have a favorite trip or a  
cherished spot that you would  
like to tell us about? It could be a  
hike, a car ride, or a sail trip—  
but write us about your favorite  
place in Maine.**

## THE LIGHTER SIDE OF DARKNESS

Around noon on October 21, 1947, I came out of the bank at Fryeburg. A friend on the sidewalk greeted me with, "Hi, it sure is warm for October, isn't it?" I replied, "Yes, and awful dry, too." As if I had said the magic word, the local fire siren began to wail. In the direction of what is now the airport, a column of smoke was rising . . .

We were so complacent. The air was dead still. They would soon have it out. If anyone had told me that in less than a week the same fire would be threatening my home, twelve miles away, I would have called him seven kinds of crazy. But it was!

The long-continued drought had penetrated deeper than anyone realized. The fire found dry roots below the surface by which it could pass under fire lines which were thought to be secure. On the twenty-second, it broke out and crept closer to Brownfield. At the Little Saco River it seemed to be under control—it couldn't tunnel under that.

But it could jump over and on the twenty-third it did, with the assistance of a fifty-mile-per-hour wind out of the Northeast. It over-ran several fire departments and swept on toward Brownfield, initiating a long, agonizing day and a seemingly endless night of terror.

The statistics are well documented: so many houses burned in Brownfield, so many houses lost in Hiram. The sheer frustration of those who tried to stop it, the despair of those who left their homes in flames, can only be imagined. They are things better to be forgotten, if such a thing is possible.

To those who fought the fire even to the point of exhaustion, there came at times, when least expected, little incidents of a near-humorous nature that served to assuage fatigue and lift the spirit.

With abject apology to those who, from the personal suffering the fire caused them, see nothing funny about it, I would like to record some of these happenings that still linger in my memory.

I was an engineer for the Hiram Fire Department. I was half-asleep in a chair at the store, having been out all night, when ten short blasts on the air whistle brought me to my feet. The riot call! A call never used before!

At the fire station we learned that firemen returning from Brownfield had brought grim reports of its destruction and the disturbing news that Hiram would most surely be next in line.

Refugees from Brownfield began to come through town with whatever they had been able to save, in and on their vehicles. The rumor was that all of western Maine was doomed and that the only safe refuge would be Frye's Island in Sebago Lake. Panic spread from house to house like a row of falling dominoes. People began to pack and move out.

Shortly after four p.m., the fire jumped the Saco River into the Pickle Field area, one mile up King Street from the center of East Hiram. Acting Chief Louis Lamont led a large crew of volunteers out to meet it.

By five o'clock, houses in the Gould Farm and Hiram Hill area were aflame.

Above the Lowell Crossing, the fire crossed the railroad tracks and headed for Hiram Village. Our department's crew beat it back with portable forest fire pumps.

Freeman Howard, a retired State Fire Warden, heard that a large crew of men was on the railroad tracks just below this point, waiting for someone to tell them what to do. Under his direction, they backfired from this point along the tracks to Hiram Hill road and then up Hiram Hill road to a point where the fire had crossed the road ahead of them. This made our northern flank temporarily secure. It gave us time to set our one and only pumper a few yards south of Hiram Bridge and lay out some hose.

The outlook was grim. Half a mile of village to protect with an ageing five-hundred-gallon-per-minute pumper and five or six men under the direction of Assistant Chief Roland Clemons. We laid out hose to a point near Hiram Railroad station and started pumping and hoping.

The scream of a fire siren is not normally a pleasant sound, but at six that night it was sweet music. Up Route 113 came one big pumper, and then another, and then another. Within the hour, additional pumpers were hooked up to the Saco River along that hot half mile. Next came four large tank trucks sent by Merrill Transport of Portland. They provided the water that finally made the fire at the Pickle Field secure.

Before sunset the smoke which had enveloped us since mid-afternoon seemed to become thinner as did the fallout of burnt-out cinders. The wind had changed from northwest to due north. Very slowly we came to realize the significance of this. The fire, which had been turned aside at Hiram Hill Road, would not come at us with the wind. It would go west of us behind Mt. Cutler. Our fire could come backing slowly down the mountainside while the main fire would go raging on unchecked, to threaten Durgintown, Cornish, and South Hiram.

By morning the wind had subsided a little. Mop-up crews were on the fire lines. Our crew could take a breather.

It was at this point that I became conscious of the peril of my position. Right beside the engine, unnoticed in last night's turmoil, were several hives of bees. My first impulse was to move the engine, but that proved unfeasible. As the morning sun warmed the hives, the worker bees became active. Will Tarbox, their owner, sought to calm my apprehension. He said, "They are gentle bees. Don't go close to them. Stay as far as you can and they will leave you alone." I did and they did.

One of the tank truck drivers was less fortunate. As we filled his truck, he came over and looked at the strange white boxes. He asked, "What are these things for?" My reply must have been lost in the roar of the engine. He went over and peered into






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the little hole in the hive. I can't say how many watchman bees were on duty in that hive, but I'd be willing to bet that tanker boy can.

At this time our troubles were far from over. The main fire was still advancing unchecked, leaving in its wake a tremendous mop-up and patrol job.

Control headquarters were set at Mt. Cutler Grange hall and the wives and daughters commandeered the kitchen and set up a feeding station for the firemen.

The mobile tank truck, equipped with an effective pump, had not then come into general use and there were many places where the big pumpers could not work. Of necessity, people improvised. The Sebago men chained an abandoned steam boiler to the bed of a logging truck, added a motor-driven orchard spray pump, loaded up with water, and set out for Hiram. Lacking a siren, they used a pair of cow bells as a substitute.

Because they were so mobile, they were placed on reserve alert. Calls would come in of a breakdown here or a suspicious smoke there. Off they would go, motor roaring and back-firing, cow bells ringing. Some calls were false alarms. Some calls resulted in action proved their real worth. These men refused to go home. They ate and slept at the Grange Hall, saying they had much rather keep the fire in Hiram and out of Sebago.

The men of Baldwin felt the same way. A large part of the fire area was separated from Baldwin by the Saco River. They sent a large contingent of men to keep it that way. They established themselves along the river road which leads to Cornish.

One night three of these men came to our engine, inquiring for the whereabouts of the Hiram Fire Warden. They were upset to the point of violence. Someone had told them that the warden had said that the Cornish road was the least of his worries. They took that to mean that he didn't care whether Baldwin survived or not. Fortunately, they couldn't find him. Later the warden admitted that he did indeed make that statement but he said what he meant was he didn't worry about it because it was in such good hands.

Hiram had a heavy four-wheel drive truck, surplus from World War II, which had done service in plowing snow. A large water tank was

chained to it and a portable forest fire pump was added.

It became invaluable. It could go places where no other vehicle could. It was manned by the younger members of Hiram Fire Department. Ronald Breslin, Sr. was its pilot. When it went into action on the Cornish road, the Baldwin crew decided he was completely mad. The truck, affectionately known as Bertha, had a loud voice. It couldn't go very fast, but it sounded fast. When the Baldwinites heard it coming, they took cover.

Bertha could push over a sizeable tree, if one was rash enough to be in her way. She did this many times when opening a path from the Cornish road to the Durgintown road.

In the heat of this operation Ronald didn't see an overhanging limb. The crash nearly demolished the cab, immobilizing the truck before oncoming flames. A man armed with a saw appeared and proceeded to cut Bertha free. He was on the verge of tears as he said, "Here is the only truck there that is worth a Goddamn and now you fellers have stove it all to Hell." Before long he cleared away the limb, putting them back into action. Bertha still lives today—completely refitted she does yeoman service for the fire department.

The same day, a State Fire Warden came to our engine with a load of back tanks and asked for a quick fill. He told us that the fire had been diverted from the Wadsworth mansion (Longfellow's summer home) but other problems were developing. Just then a carload of men, who identified themselves as volunteers from one of Maine's institutions of higher learning, arrived on the scene. One of them said, "We want to see some fire. We have driven a number of miles and haven't seen a spark. Is this thing for real?"

The warden stared at him with smoke-bleared eyes. There was soot on his face and cinder-burns in his jacket. The volunteer continued: "We want to see some fire."

The warden's voice came huskily, with no expression. "Come with me."

He took them down to the Cornish road to a point where the great Wadsworth Meadow borders on the highway. At the far end of the meadow, the fire which had been diverted from the Wadsworth Mansion was slowly making its way

**Over that long October weekend in 1947, it seemed as if all of Maine was burning. Four separate fires burned: in Bar Harbor, Waterboro, Newfield, and this one which burned the town of Brownfield and 20,000 acres of forest land around Hiram and Fryeburg.**

out into the tall, dry meadow grass.

As he gave each one a back tank, he explained, "I am going to set a backfire at the edge of the meadow. Your job is to follow me and make sure that no fire blows across the road."

Before he could light his torch the fire had worked itself out into the high wind and came leaping forward in a wall of flame ten feet high. Though still far away, it was approaching rapidly.

Their wish fulfillment overpowered the lads. At last they had seen fire and they didn't like it. They ran frantically to their car and were last seen headed toward Cornish in a cloud of dust!

Fortunately some of the Baldwin crew arrived just in time to man the tanks and finish the back fire.

Disturbed by rumors of looters and fire bugs, Earl Johnson and Rufus Spiller decided to stand guard at the Hiram bridge on the second night. Earl was armed with a loaded deer rifle. Spiller held up any car that chanced along. Earl said, "Question them, Spiller, and if they give you any trouble, I'll put the lead to 'em." The situation became a little tense at times, but no shots were fired.

That same night, they cautioned a man who was walking up and down the street puffing on a pipe from which the wind was blowing sparks. The man was gazing at the starlit sky and exclaiming, over and over, "Rain dammit, rain."

On Sunday the National Guard moved in, their object being to turn away sight-seers and discourage looting. It became my duty that day to haul gas from the station across the river to our pumper. At the approach to the bridge I was challenged by a youth in military garb, whose pink cheeks gave little indication of ever needing a razor. But he had a fixed bayonet on the gun he held pointed at my radiator, and he meant business. A look at my badge, and he reluctantly let me pass. I made several more trips and each time the challenge was repeated. Either he had a poor memory, or a fierce dedication to duty.

Two teen-aged youths driving a war-surplus jeep came and offered their services. They made couriers,

carrying messages between the base and various watch points. The reverse gear in the Jeep didn't work, so they had to operate in circles. Once when they were caught in a jam where they just couldn't circle, several men seized the Jeep and its passengers, picked them up, and turned them around.

With all the panic and confusion, it was a miracle that no one was injured. The American Red Cross was on hand with first-aid equipment. The technician in charge was heard to lament, "I feel so useless, hasn't someone even got a cinder in the eye?"

By the evening of the day following the breakout, in spite of cat naps from time to time, I was beginning to feel a little groggy; so I was very happy when Fred Rankin, another engineman who had been out of town, appeared on the scene. He took over operations, but as he had not operated the pump for some time, he asked me to stay nearby during the night, just in case.

Will, the man in whose yard we were set up, said I could sleep on his couch in the living room. If Fred ever needed me that night, I never heard him.

In the morning I awakened to the scents of frying steak, coffee, and something which proved to be hash-browned potatoes. "Sit right down," Will invited. Something not caused by hunger agitated my stomach. The night before, Will, who had refreshed himself with several beers, had casually used the dish-filled sink for a purpose not normally seen in genteel circles. With a firm, "No, thank you," I went out to check on Fred.

"Had your breakfast?" he asked. At my negative response, he pointed to a large box. "Grub," he said. There was an odd gleam in his eye.

Some well-meaning soul had separated slices of dry bread with equally dry slices of bologna, minus butter, mustard, or any other condiment, and not even wrapped.

Fred said, "I offered some to a stray dog and he wouldn't eat it either."

About that time, Lloyd Clemons, who lived nearby, invited me in to a breakfast consisting of cereal for openers, an unending supply of baked beans, and donuts fresh from the pan

for a grand finale.

The same day an event occurred that some people thought very hilarious. A woman became distraught to the point of collapse because her husband had not returned from many hours on the fire line. For occupational therapy someone hooked up a garden hose and set her to wetting the dry grass on the front lawn. She took her stand in the driveway, revolving slowly, wetting the bare street with water and her pallid cheeks with tears. Somehow I couldn't make that seem funny.

Another day we learned that the canteen at the Grange Hall had received a donation of meat and beef stew was on the menu. When the opportunity came, another fireman and I went over, only to find that the Sebago crew had just cleaned it all up. We had coffee and egg sandwiches and fervently hoped that stew would make them sick.

Operating a pumper is about as safe a job as there is around a fire, but there was a time, one of those nights, when my life was in real danger.

About one o'clock in the morning, a Merrill Tanker pulled in for water. A fireman was usually in attendance to handle the filling hose. This time there wasn't one there. I instructed the driver in handling the hose and, presenting him with a flashlight, said, "Now when that section is 'most full, be sure to flash that light and I will stop pumping so you can change to the next section." I started pumping, but when I knew from past experience that the section must be nearly full, no flash came. Then against the backdrop of the sky, I saw a column of water ascending. Quickly I cut the pump and turned to face an enraged and very wet trucker bearing down on me. In emergencies the mind speeds up and I realized that, instead of flashing the light he had shouted, the sound of which had been lost in the roar of my engine. Pulling myself up as far as five foot seven would go, I snarled, "What in hell do you think I gave you that flashlight for?" He looked at the instrument, still clutched in his hand, as if seeing it for the first time. He shook his head and



MARTIN

# MAINES IN A

ROCKWELL

(second in



*Starlight*

*Flame*



It would be nice to describe Rockwell Kent in terms as clear and simple as these black-and-white wood engravings. But Kent was too complex a man, too versatile and controversial for such an easy analysis. He was admired and

feared, praised and damned. No criticism, good or bad, changed his lifelong beliefs in defense of good art, human dignity, and social justice.

His astonishing creative urge drove him to master every aspect of life that attracted him, from the design for a postage stamp in defense of Republican Spain (1936-37) to monumental paintings of wilderness landscapes; from acid diatribes against abstract art to lyrical illustrations for the classics of Boccaccio, Shakespeare, Voltaire, and Chaucer.

Rockwell Kent was born poor in Tarrytown, New York in 1882. He left home as a boy, unwilling to burden his family with his support. He worked at a variety of jobs to sustain himself and his passion to become an artist. Between jobs he studied with well-known artists William Merritt Chase, Abbot Thayer, and Robert Henri.

It was because of Henri, artist and superb teacher, that Kent came to Monhegan Island in 1905. In the ensuing years, he painted the first of his powerful landscapes. More realistic than his later works, they were the first revelation of Kent's love affair with the raw, untamed, and remote places of the earth. Lloyd Goodrich, then Director of the Whitney Museum of American Art, wrote:

"These early Monhegan paintings, with their uncompromising clarity, their concentration on the stark forms of the island, and their romantic delight in great expanses of sea, cold northern sky, and brilliant light, were among his most moving works."

Kent loved hard work. He was lobsterman, farmer, sailor, and carpenter. He built a house with his own hands on Monhegan Island. (Today it is the summer home of another gifted painter—Jamie Wyeth.)

DIBNER

# DREAMS ART<sup>©</sup>

LL KENT

a series)

In 1907, Kent established summer art classes on Monhegan with Julius Golz. The enthusiasm of Henri and Kent for Monhegan inspired numerous other American painters, including George Bellows, to live and paint there. It is still an ideal summer artists' sanctuary.

Some of Kent's finest achievements were in the fields of wood engraving and stone lithography. His autobiographical accounts describe in words and pictures the places he has been, the nature of the people and the terrain, and his own feelings about them. Titles worth reading are: *N by E* and *Salamina*, both about Greenland; *Wilderness*, about Alaska; and *It's Me O Lord*, his 1955 autobiography.

Some years before his death in 1971, Kent generously offered his priceless collection of Maine paintings to at least one major art museum in Maine. The details are not clear, but it seems the museum trustees, with one exception, regarded Kent as too radical a personality. Despite the pleas of the single trustee to ignore Kent's politics and accept the gift from one of America's great landscape painters, they turned him down. Museums in Leningrad, Kiev, and Moscow, however, were honored and delighted to have the paintings. This issue's cover, *Sunset, Monhegan*, painted in 1910, is one of them.

Tragedy stalked Rockwell Kent in his declining years. His studio in upstate New York burned, destroying a large amount of his lifetime work. He died at the age of 89 in Plattsburgh, New York. His friend, William Gropper, one of America's celebrated graphic artists and satirists, had this to say: "There is only one Rockwell Kent. His vision opened the great wide skies of the north to us, their people and their everyday lives on the land."

Maine will remember Rockwell Kent, and through the universality of his art, the world will know and remember Maine.




*God Speed*

*Mountain Climber*







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Kenneth L. Bailey   Glenn E. Chute

... Page 15

turned back to his work. Since that time I have held great respect for the good judgement and self-control of tank truck drivers.

A massive array of men and machines stopped the fire on the edge of Durgintown, along a line between the Cornish road and Route 160, and everyone settled into a series of night and day watches, praying for rain.

Finally we were awakened by the sound of rain on the roof. I checked in for duty and was instructed to "Pick up and hang up." That was the first and only time that we really enjoyed hanging up hose!

At the next meeting of the Fire Department, the whole operation was discussed at great length. The resulting conclusion: the good Lord who caused the wind shift and the splendid help of volunteers from everywhere saved Hiram, Baldwin, Cornish, and Porter from the fate of Brownfield. One other memory remains.

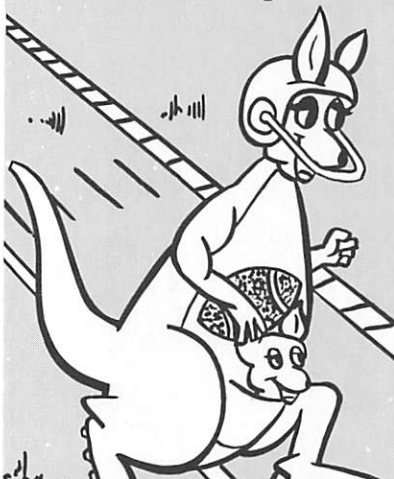
It happened on that first wild night beside the Saco River. The shutdown signal had been given so that the crew on Mt. Cutler could put on more hose. I stood watching for the flash of light that would be the signal to start pumping again.

The motor of the pumper muttered quietly to itself. The wind as it passed through the pine trees beside me made a hissing sound like the voice of a giant snake. A man I did not know came out of the darkness and asked what was the trouble. He stood by and helped me watch for the flash. In the distance, a siren raised its voice in a scream of agony, then fell away to a low-pitched moan. Somewhere on the mountain a power saw raised its voice to snarl obscene curses at an offending tree. The wind brought us the stench of a burning barn, together with clouds of smoke and a scattering of spent cinders.

The sky over Mt. Cutler pulsed with a vile red, the reflection of the raging inferno behind the crest. The stranger leaned close to me and said softly, as though communicating a secret: "You know I think that old timer who wrote that book all about Hell must have seen a forest fire." Perhaps that stranger was right.

*Raymond "Red" Cotton is a long-time resident of Hiram and operator of Cotton's Store by Hiram bridge.*

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# GUS\*

*\*A loving tribute to Karlton Higgins (1914-1980) by Terry Bussoone Moher*



You just have to forget yourself for his sake." I recognized familiar warmth. And, when I looked at him, I realized that he couldn't look at me because he was fighting it, too.

We walked into Mercy Hospital in silence, just holding hands and sharing the sorrow. I hadn't seen Gus since the summer when the remission had evidently ended and the radiation and drug treatments had made him so weak my aunt had called to say he was dangerously ill. He had seemed older than I'd ever imagined he could be. He was too frail to hug and could barely talk, but he'd made jokes that afternoon and had relieved me with out laughter. I hadn't been

never lost a vitality few men are fortunate enough to possess at any time in their lives—a cliché, I guess. But he seemed to comprehend something that I sensed few people had the capability of perceiving. As a child I was in awe of him. He was more wonderful, in the literal sense of the word, than my own father. Stern and disciplined and hearty, he possessed the gentleness and compassion that I rarely have found in men.

His voice comes to mind; for as long as I can remember, he has always answered the telephone with a formal, rather subdued "Mr. Higgins." Yet, when I spoke, his

**O**n our way to the hospital that morning I was nervous, though I kept up a constant chatter that Tom probably saw through. It was my first real encounter with death for, at age 30, to Tom's amazement, I had never lost anyone—friend or relative—with whom I'd been really close. Tom had spoken often—too frequently—of friends he had lost, many because of horrible motorcycle accidents, and at moments I had shared an aching with him over the loss of a best friend at age 13, a friend who had never been replaced. Because I knew nothing of the momentary fright and desperation that periodically comes over the grieving person, I was embarrassed and ashamed when I broke down crying as we approached the hospital.

I decided I couldn't go in to see Gus. There were too many personal memories I didn't want destroyed by whatever atrocities the cancer had done to him. Tom seemed distant and indifferent, so unlike him. I supposed, after all, Gus was my uncle and Tom had only known him for a short time. Giving in to my anguish, I used it to stall for time and waited for Tom to say that it was all right, that perhaps it would be better if we didn't disturb him. Instead, he shook me out of my self-pity with his unexpected reaction. He understood how difficult it was, he said; he'd had to face it before, he reminded me. But in Tom's inimitable words, "If I were checking out, I sure would want people there!



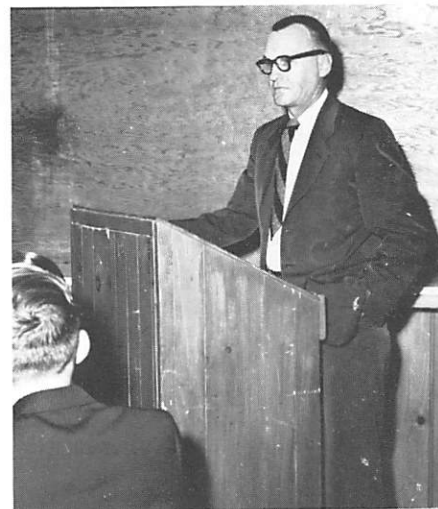
**Top:** Gus in his office at Oxford High

**Middle:** Coaching basketball from the sidelines at South Paris High in the 1950's: (l. to r.) Teacher Bob Kessell, Steve Higgins, Principal Gus Higgins, and Coach "Tinker" Day.

**Bottom:** Teaching at Oxford

able to call or write or see him since, however. I didn't really understand my resistance, but I didn't want to communicate with them. I couldn't think about the death aspect, out of fear of the unknown, or perhaps fear of breaking down and embarrassing him. Evidently he could deal with it well, but I knew I wasn't that strong. It was easier to try to not think about his illness. He was one of the strongest men I've ever known and I couldn't bear to see him changed.

Though Gus lived to be about 67, he



response was always, "Hello de-ah! When you comin' up?" I was always welcomed and, as a guest, received the most hearty hospitality. He waited on his company hand and foot, enjoying every moment in an age when a man was supposedly less of a man for doing so. He did everything cheerfully. He was fascinated by the most simple experiences. Even a trip to the dump became an adventure for us kids, for he seemed to enjoy it so much that we caught his enthusiasm. A trout farm near the dump was a source of pleasure, and he took everyone who had not been at least once. Everything he did, even getting the liver pellets for each one of us to feed the trout, became an interesting rite. And he loved to share everything.

He was a teacher by profession, but he was a natural teacher. Even had he not been in education, he would have shared his knowledge and experiences and enthusiasm with everyone—for nature and history and music and philosophy. He was somehow able to make profound statements about life without moralizing or preaching. I was in my twenties when I learned to appreciate his thoughts on life. We shared many talks about single life and married life, about teaching and about people, and he showed genuine concern. He shared so many stories of his 35 years in teaching that I believe, as I look back, that he was a strong influence on my choice of profession and imbued in me much of his idealism.

He was never cynical, and when we talked of negative aspects of any subject he often said, quite simply and matter-of-factly, "Well, de-ah, that's life, you know." He read the dictionary, not arrogantly, but out of simple pleasure. He was a true Yankee, with all its connotations, and yet always impressed me with his sophistication and intellect.

He'd been selected Teacher of the Year in 1964. As principal of Gray High School, he was so proud of his faculty and students that I visited him there once. I was strangely disappointed that the special feeling I'd always shared with him was shared by so many others: his personal secretary and his teachers and his students. As a principal he was tough on those young people, and they loved him. In his quiet manner he teased and kidded and laughed

with "his" students, and yet also disciplined! They appreciated his sincerity and direct manner, and they returned his respect—something which few of them ever experienced with adults. He embodied the antithetical concept that love is something that isn't diminished as it is given away; that sharing among people promotes a general concern for one another.

**Excerpts from the recommendation letter written by Lester B. Harriman, Superintendent of the Oxford-Woodstock-Waterford-Hebron-Stoneham School Union No. 21 to the State Department of Education in 1963:**

My nomination for teacher of the year is principal of a small high school. . . his name is Karlton E. Higgins and he is principal of Oxford High School. He is a dedicated teacher and, as principal, gives his students the kind of guidance that can come only from years of working with youngsters and from considered judgement and mature wisdom.

Mr. Higgins is the kind of person who helps smooth the path for young teachers—both with students and with their parents. He seems to sense the most propitious time for sympathizing or for spurring a student on. His students feel a great respect and many times an emotional tie to him. He guides his students more by putting the responsibility of how they should act up to them than by using an iron hand, and they sense this and respond to it.

We entered the hospital room somewhat resignedly, afraid to disturb him, or perhaps afraid to disturb me. Expecting the obvious dying image of a man, I found instead a very weak Gus, speaking in almost inaudible tones to someone on the phone—a woman, I learned, who wasn't well and whom Gus had called to offer comfort. He was too weak to show much sign of emotion, but I looked closely to find my familiar Gus and he was still there. He seemed to "come to life" as we talked. The pain was evidently great—he held a grimace much of the time but, despite his discomfort and weakness, he talked and joked and laughed with us for two hours. It wasn't until near the end of that time that he missed a single line of description. All the

while, beneath the hard-lined gray lips lay a smile! A marvelous touch of his joy of life. The glint was almost gone from his eyes, dull and clouded with pain, yet he still had that sense of Yankee humor which speaks of life as it is. It wasn't the punchlines, but the marvelous descriptions of people and their responses to life that inevitably evinced laughter from his stories: the sharing of humanity.

Though we waited for his pain and suffering to end, we had attended his "wake" that day. He had planned a Christmas party for December 6th and insisted everyone get together in spite of his absence. He was pleased Tom and I were going and urged us to join the others at his house. But he kept holding us back with "one more" story, clinging to life, it seemed, by keeping us there with him. Tom had been right.

Gus had planned for his own cremation and saw nothing morbid or grotesque in doing so or talking about it. He faced death with the reality by which he had lived. I never knew him to be religious in the formal sense of the word. He never attended church nor do I know if he belonged to any denomination even as a child. However, the last story he told us summed up what he considered his philosophy of life, learned from his mother at age five. It impressed me with its simplicity. Even, as he put it, with a college roommate present, he was never too embarrassed to pray on his knees: in the morning, determined that he would enjoy the day, and at night, thankful that he had enjoyed it, no matter what had happened. It was this wonderful understanding and acceptance of life that allowed Gus to die in the joyful and dignified manner in which he lived.

*Karlton Evon Higgins died December 18, 1980. A graduate of the class of 1938 at Gorham Normal School, he held a masters degree in education from the University of Maine, Orono and taught at various places until 1948, when he became principal of South Paris High School. Later beloved principal of Oxford and Gray-New Gloucester High Schools, he was also active in sports. In 1946 he was the Bangor Daily News' choice for Coach of the Year; and he was the golf pro at Norway Country Club and Poland's Fairlawn Golf Course. Mrs. Moher is his niece.*



# Creating The Alternative School by Denis Ledoux

## Part II

At the New Country School in West Baldwin, this is restaurant day—when the kids in Ken Wilson's upper elementary group offer a meal to students, parents, and assorted visitors. The older children move around excitedly. The sun shines in strongly and warms the rooms filled with learning materials, stored where children can have easy access to them. These are child-centered rooms where teachers serve as facilitators.

By the end of lunch the kids will have served 65 meals and earned \$18.00 toward a trip to a dinosaur dig in Massachusetts. The event draws a considerable number of parents, providing the opportunity not only to support the children's project but also to bring together this diverse but dedicated group of alternative school parents in an informal community setting.

The organization and maintenance of such a school as NCS is no mean feat and some of the credit must go to the board of directors—a twelve-member self-perpetuating group open to all.

"How decisions are made is the key to what happens here," says Christina Dexter, one-time president of the group. "The right decision arrived at by the wrong means is wrong for our school."

This is a theme heard over and over again at NCS. The process of governing and of learning is as important as the product. There is no end-justifies-the-means approach here.

The board handles long-range issues: building maintenance, hiring policies, the budget—the usual nuts-and-bolts matters. In addition, the board has set up committees to study issues such as educational policy and tuition schedules.

The board tried establishing a teacher-evaluation group. "Our goal was to assess our teachers for re-

hiring," says Christina. "We had never done this in the past and we hope never to do it again! It turned out to be critical rather than constructive. We were approaching an end from the wrong means."

"Our point was that we wanted the best teachers possible for our children. How were we to achieve this? This year we have a teacher-support group. Our goal now is teacher 'development' rather than education."

Christina's involvement is as deep as her concern for education. This is a school where people care about children, where people create forms that give support to the content they wish to impart.

I am reminded, as I talk with her, of another discussion of educational goals and options with a group of school officials and teachers at a Maine Lyceum meeting. We were discussing the teaching of democracy. One teacher suggested offering supplementary courses on democracy; a principal thought the teaching of democratic precepts should be handled in various subject matters. When I suggested that the best way to "teach" democracy in our schools was to treat it as a process rather than content (i.e. practice democracy in our schools, respect the student's ability to make decisions, to function in the context of give and take), my idea was quickly dismissed. For others, democracy in the "real world" was best left out of everyday life. Yet here, at New Country School, parents and staff believe that you "teach" what you practice and not what you preach. They plan their individualized curricula and activities in accordance with this belief.

It is time for a farewell party for Dana, who is going to another school on Monday. Ken, who has been his teacher for the last several years, delivers a short address: "You have been a leader," he says. "I have

depended on you more than any other boy." Dana smiles, obviously pleased.

The New Country School only goes to the sixth-grade level. Afterward, children attend the local public schools. NCS people feel that, rather than go until June and transfer to the large consolidated junior high, children should transfer to the sixth grade in a smaller local public school in mid-year. Teachers at New Country School try to make the transition as smooth as possible. A teacher has already visited the public school with Dana and has tried to help him to understand and accept the myriad differences between the public school and NCS. Later, after he has made the change, he is encouraged to return to NCS for support or help.

Dana's mother Rose says of NCS: "It's been worth every cent. It was money well spent."

Yearly tuition at New Country School ranges from \$425 to \$900. The school's board has decided that 2/3 of the budget must be met through tuition/ Each family pledges an amount between the top and the low tuition figures. If the total surpasses the 2/3 needed, the school is in business. If the total is less, then the pledges are returned to the current parents with a request that they consider upping their contribution. Last year, the school collected almost \$1,500 extra in the first round of pledges.

The remaining third of the budget is met through well-organized fundraising. The biggest annual event is the fall cider-pressing project. Everyone gets out to help and, in the end, the school makes about half of its fundraising goal through this effort. The remainder comes from donations and from small events such as bake sales in the malls in Portland or from garage sales, suppers, etc.

The entire NCS community is expected to participate in fundraisers

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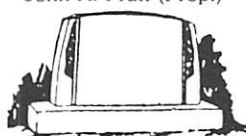
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and generally does. The group is fairly close but it is not homogeneous. Says Peter Hagarty, an in-migrant who was involved in the founding of the Maine Woodsman Association, "We are a bi-cultural school. Children of in-migrants meet children of locals... it's good for the kids and good for the parents. The socio-political and cultural issues which are alive in the larger community are also alive at New Country School. As a group, we are committed to resolving those differences. I look forward to board meetings. In the last two or three years, the board has become an effective tool for decision making."

Hagarty joined the NCS effort before his daughter Cora was born. (She is now in the toddler play group.) He is interested in the philosophical implications of education.

"Is an alternative school," he asks, "merely a pleasant setting where adults are supportive or is it an important moratorium from the too-early exposure to the harshness and lack of caring which makes children into insensitive, cynical adults?"

It is clear from his tone of voice which of the two answers he opts for: the latter.

By the time Peter Hagarty and I finish our talk, almost everyone has left. Even Peter Zack is gone. Only a few parents doing their weekly clean-up stint remain.

I pack my things and take one last look around, reluctant to end this meaningful encounter with the power of good ideas well-implemented.

It has been a good day. I envy these children and their parents their experience and participation in New Country School. Will there be such a school for my daughter, her mother, and myself, when the time comes?

Driving back along Route 113, leaving the hills and the now-setting sun behind, my mind dances with the excitement of possibility and I realize that this is the essence of New Country School: the contagious excitement of new experience, of uninhibited growth achieving its potential.

This indeed is education! How much of this can we bring back to our community schools? There lies our challenge.

Ledoux, who recently moved to Portland, has been a teacher in both alternative and public schools.

# Halloween Fiction

by Jim Keil

The hinge squeaks faintly. The squeak is absorbed by the dull thud of the door as it slams shut. The clanging sound of the lock echoes off the bare walls, down the hall toward the stairs, and seems to return to this very spot. I am frozen with fear. Still, I can't keep my eyes off that door. It was fashioned by hand, with the kind of care and skill a craftsman of long-ago generations would have put into it. The rich grain of the wood is exotic—wavy, leading into a thousand different directions without detracting from the overall symmetry of the door. The brass lockset is heavy, the handle worn to a full shine, with intricate scrollwork cast into the plate above it.

A key turns in the lock. The footsteps I hear sound very soft, as though the floor were made of sand. The footsteps reach the stairs, echo back toward the door for just a second. Then there is complete silence. Everything is still—no motion, no sound. Just silence.

I look around the room. Aside from the magnificent door, the room is totally bare, filled only with that deathly silence. The walls were plastered with ancient plaster, mixed by hand and held together with bits of hair and straw. Around the edges of the door, the fine ends of the hair can be seen sticking out of the corners.

There are no windows in the room; no heat ducts or pipes; or breaks of any kind in the monotony of the four walls. They climb to a ceiling that must be at least 9 feet high. Both walls and ceiling are painted stark white. There is a beautifully detailed carved crown moulding at the edge of the ceiling and wall, and fancy moulding at the floor, both of which have been painted thick with anti-septic white paint.

The floor is wide pine boards, pegged in place with no nails. The flooring is worn thin in front of the door, but even in the worn spot it is oiled and buffed to a high gloss. There is not one speck of dust anywhere in the room. Everything is scrubbed sterile. The only light in the room comes in from under the door where

the flooring is worn, leaving a gap between the floor and the bottom edge of the door.

I am aware that I have been drugged; I am not able to concentrate on anything. It is as if someone has opened a drain in me and all my bones have turned to liquid and are running right out of me. I drip into a puddle on the floor and drift into a deep but uneasy sleep.

\*\*\*\*\*

I had been hitchhiking to Kentucky to visit a friend. I left Wednesday afternoon, after deciding to quit college for a while. My freshman year hadn't turned out just the way I had expected it. I couldn't adjust to the discipline of it, and I felt out of place.

My friend in Kentucky had quit two months before, and had moved into an apartment, working just enough to keep alive. Once a month he would sell a pint of blood to the Red Cross and he would wash cars a couple of days a week to keep himself in cigarettes and beer. I packed the few clothes I had with me in my old blue duffle bag, took my guitar, and headed for Knoxville.

It was cold and very windy as I said goodbye to the guys in the dorm. I had on a warm wool sweater and a heavy jacket, but I was still frozen as I walked down the hill to Main Street. Another student passed by in his car and gave me a lift out to the turnpike entrance.

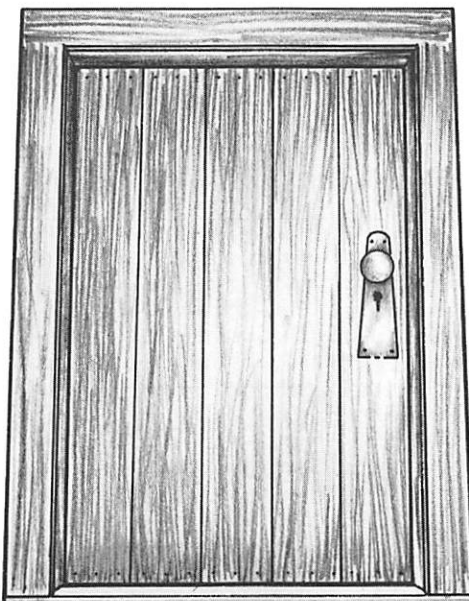
The snow started before he let me out. By the time I got to the turnpike, it was swirling in the wind and beginning to lay on the road. I stood in that Arctic wind, facing traffic with my frostbitten thumb out, pleading for a ride. Car after car passed me by. I was beginning to have serious doubts about whether they would find me in a snowbank, frozen solid, when an old green car stopped.

I ran as fast as I could, dragging my duffle bag and guitar, and jumped into the open door. It wasn't much warmer inside than out. The driver was a sergeant in the Army, he said, on his way to West Virginia.

As we crawled along in the storm that was developing into the winter's worst, slipping and sliding, passing one vehicle that had been abandoned in frustration after another, all our windows blocked solid with snow except for tiny holes kept laboriously open by the windshield wipers; Sherby, the driver, said, "Why don't you reach into the back seat and grab one of those bottles?" I did, and came up with a fifth of Johnnie Walker red label scotch. He cracked the top and handed it to me. Between us, we nearly drained it on the first time around.

The scotch hit like fire in my stomach. It reminded me of the times when I was a little kid, when my grandfather would fire up the old potbellied stove in his barn on a cold winter day. The fire started small, hardly a spark, deep in the belly of the stove, then, as it caught, it would warm a little more, then a little more of the stove until, finally, there would be a roaring fire inside and I could feel the heat creep along my fingers and toes, and I would finally be warm. I was warm now, glowing.

In between toasts to the weather, the road, the car, the scotch, and whatever else seemed deserving of a toast, I learned that Sherby was from a little town in West Virginia, not far from Pittsburgh. He said he grew up in this little mountain village that hadn't changed much at all since the Revolutionary days. Moonshine was



# THE

# DOOR



king. Although many of the people there held down jobs somewhere else, Sherby said almost everybody had a still of some size on his property, and outsiders weren't welcomed much.

We had a pretty good time together, old Sherby and I. He'd been in the service twenty years; quit school to join up, just to get away from Squirrel Creek. He hated the place and came from one of those hillbilly families you read about. He said he had hundreds of relatives his family never had anything to do with, because a grandfather and a cousin had a fight way back in 1887, and nobody from either family had spoken since.

Sherb was only going back this time because his mother had died and he was going to the funeral. He wasn't looking forward to it much and that seemed to be the reason for the case of scotch. His "luggage" he called it. "Hand me another piece of that luggage, there, will you sport?" I was never that big a drinker, anyway, so I slowed almost to a stop just as soon as I got warm. But Ol' Sherb, he got warm, then warmer, then hot. He finished two of those bottles before we got to Pittsburgh.

The storm showed no signs of letting up as we crossed the bridge into West Virginia. There was a good foot and a half on the ground and it was still solid white coming down. We pulled into a truck stop and Sherby and I had a hamburger and some coffee. Coffee never tasted so good.

Sherb took the last bite of his hamburger, and balanced it right in the center of his mouth while he talked around it, never spitting a crumb of it. Then, in mid-sentence, he took a swig of coffee and the sandwich disappeared. "Listen, Sport," he said, "You're coming down to Squirrel Creek with me to spend the night. I'm not about to let you hitchhike in this kind of weather. Besides, without that luggage, you'd freeze to death," Sherby said, laughing at his own joke. I chuckled with him and we headed to the parking lot and his car.

Almost from the time we got back into Sherby's car, he started telling me more about his family . . . it was almost as if he were warning me about something. He said we'd be staying at his mother's place. It was a very old place; it had been there since that part of West Virginia was

originally settled. It had been in his family for generations. I was surprised to hear him say his folks had money. He had painted a picture, in my mind, of a bunch of ragged people making corn liquor in a bathtub. But he said his people had been wealthy for years, though different, very different. He described them as very independent, loyal to those they liked, but not at all the sort of people you would want to cross.

Sherby took a long pull on the scotch bottle and passed it to me. I'd never seen anyone who could drink like Sherb. I said to him, "Sherby, you sound like you're apologizing for your folks. You don't have to do that." Sherby cut me off abruptly: "No, it's not that I'm apologizing at all. These people are dangerous. You have to understand that. They're my kin, and sometimes they can be charming, but they're dangerous. You take things on their terms and you don't get to arguing, not with none of them, not about anything . . . y'hear?" I was beginning to wonder if I should have come down here at all.

The house was like something out of a bad movie. The place had all the warmth of the inside of a freezer. We couldn't get up the lane from the road. We took the first fifty yards full speed, the rear end sliding one way, then the other; then Sherby buried her nose-first in a drift that was over the hood. I grabbed my guitar and duffle bag and jumped out. Sherby grabbed two bottles of the scotch and we started hoofing it up the hill. The snow stopped almost that suddenly. The moon shone in the middle of a pitch-black break in the silver clouds, bathing the old house in satin brilliance. It looked like a castle. And it was so cold.

The front door looked to be about eight feet high, and made of solid oak. There was a knocker on the door, about a foot long, made of brass. Sherby grabbed it, turned to me and said, "Now you remember what I said to you, kid." He started to swing the knocker on the door but stopped as the huge door swung slowly open. Standing in the open doorway was a man, nearly seven feet tall, who seemed carved of granite and with a permanent sneer where his mouth should have been. "Big Willie, how ya doin'?" Sherby asked him. Willie stuck out a mammoth paw and shook Sherby's hand. Without so much as a

hint of a smile, he answered, "Good, Sherby. Hell of a night for y'all to be travelin'." Sherby turned toward me and said to Willie, "Willie, this here's Jim. He's been travelin' with me." Willie shook my hand, his face a blank sheet of paper, and turned to lead us into the living room.

Willie was one of Sherby's brothers, and when I got inside I met the other one, Benny. Benny was the youngest, Sherby the oldest. Their father had died two years before and Willie and Benny had lived in this house with their mother until she had died, just a few days ago.

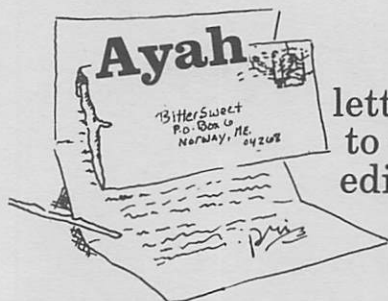
Willie broke out a jar of clear, white, homemade liquor, filled four glasses, and passed them around. Sherby asked where the rest of the family was. There were no relatives around, other than the brothers, and Sherby seemed to miss them, like he expected they would be there too. Willie said they'd be around in the morning, that the storm had kept most of them in.

I've never seen a family of brothers so cold to each other. Willie wanted to know if we had stopped elsewhere in town before we got to the house. He seemed sort of nervous about it. It had been a long trip in, and between the scotch on the way and the white moonshine, I was feeling no pain. Sherb was beginning to show the effects, too. It was strange. With all the small talk, there was no pleasant conversation among brothers. Only conversation.

I looked around the house, which was downright spooky. Every picture I looked at stared right back at me, and none of the people in the pictures smiled. The house was huge, and richly built. Nothing was spared in building it. The paneling was imported mahogany, buffed to a high waxy gloss, the floors wide pine, no rugs anywhere, and the whole place was as clean as any hospital I've ever been in. Everything in the house was luxurious, yet there was nothing that was showy. It all had some function and the only color, other than the natural woods, was hospital white.

I could tell Sherby hadn't seen his brothers in a long time. Sherb had said twenty years. As Sherby got deeper into the home brew, his tongue seemed to loosen. He brought up the subject of his mother's will. All conversation halted, and I noticed Willie's and Benny's eyes met just for

Page 25 . . .



letters  
to the  
editor

We welcome letters and print what space allows.

#### A THRILL

I was excited and happy to receive a copy of your magazine a few months ago. It was a thrill to see my poem "A Family Never Ends" in print. I wondered then if any of my friends or relatives in Maine would see it and let me know... and then I forgot all about it.

Weeks later at a gathering nearby, a young friend from Maine began her conversation with, "I picked up the nicest little magazine called *Bittersweet*. She then proceeded to tell me how she dropped into a restaurant for lunch, bought a magazine to keep her company, choosing *Bittersweet* because of the picture of horses on the cover. She opened it to the poetry and was surprised and elated to find my poem and my name with it. There was no one to share it with as she didn't know anyone in the restaurant; she said it was so hard to contain her excitement. I told her she made my day and she said the poem had made her day. It really was fun to share. And my friend further remarked that she liked the magazine a lot and planned to subscribe to it!

Audrey C. Linke  
Hamden, Connecticut

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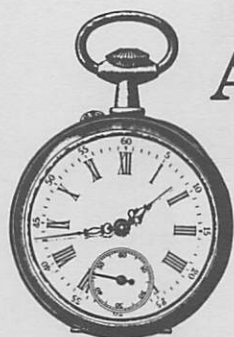
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#### AND SOME OLD IDENTIFICATIONS...

I've been going through some old pictures and papers and found a Nov. 18, 1971 *Advertiser* with the following information:

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# LEM

by Jack Barnes

Or drove her home in his father's sleigh  
 Wrapped up in buffalo robes  
 When the snow lay deep upon the ground,  
 He never quite got around to asking her  
 To be his wife and live with him  
 In the lonely old farmhouse  
 Down at the foot of the hill.

Then one day she said to him.  
 "Lem, we are moving far away."  
 Lem began to shift one foot;  
 Then he shifted the other  
 And tried to get up courage to say,  
 "Ella May, won't you please stay?"  
 Yet, all he could seem to do  
 Was stand there with one foot on the other,  
 And all he could manage to say was:  
 "Is that so?"

So Ella May's father sold his cows and  
 chickens,  
 Packed their belongings in a rickety  
 wagon,  
 And they all bade poor Lem goodbye  
 As they passed him  
 Standing forlornly  
 By the road at the foot of the hill.

For awhile letters arrived for Lem  
 Written by Ella May from Ohio  
 Where life was easier  
 And farming more prosperous.  
 Then one day a letter came,  
 Written by Ella May  
 In words that seemed to reveal  
 A note or two of sadness.  
 As Lem sat there alone at the table  
 In the old-fashioned kitchen,

A look of pain crept into his eyes  
 And he read these final lines:  
 "Lem, I shan't be writing to you no more,  
 For last night I was spoken for."

As the final grains of sand  
 Sift slowly through the hourglass,  
 Lem, an aged man  
 With deep furrows across his face,  
 Wonders if he has the strength  
 To make just one more ascent  
 To the top of the grass-covered hill  
 Where he first met Ella May  
 Raking her father's clover hay  
 And sit a spell upon the split stone steps  
 That once led up to the door  
 Of her house—long since rotted down.

Yes, the years have been lonely for old  
 Lem,  
 And there will be no one left  
 To grieve for him when life is done.  
 Life could have been different, he thinks  
 If only he had found the courage to say,  
 "Ella May, please don't go away."

Old Lem stands by the weathered barn,  
 Sharpening an ancient scythe  
 And gazing up a wind-swept hill  
 To where he first met Ella May  
 Raking hay on a warm June day.  
 He remembers well how she looked that  
 day,

Dressed in a gown as white as snow  
 And the sunlight dancing  
 Through her silken hair,  
 As black as the midnight sky.  
 It took but one glance into her dark eyes  
 That sparkled when she smiled  
 To cause his heart to palpitate  
 And his chest to swell with love.

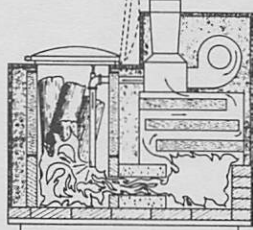
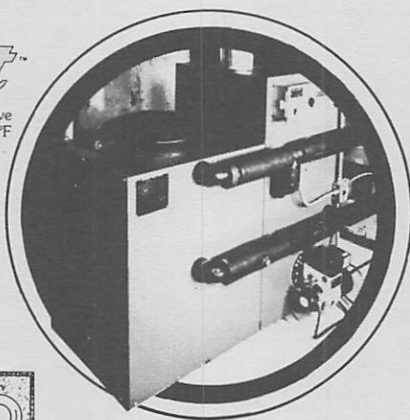
Several years passed rapidly by,  
 And although he walked with her  
 To church on Sundays when the weather  
 was warm



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Is it too wild conceit  
to hear them sewing in the wind,  
out there beyond my window,  
sewing threadless stitches in the wind?

They sew like dear old women sewing,  
old and absent-minded,  
whisp'ring incoherent syllables  
as they sew.

Their timeless tapestries distinguish  
neither past nor future.  
They drop brown needles now and then.  
They drop brown needles in the moulding leaves,  
and keep on sewing,  
sewing nothing  
in the wind . . .

*Barbara R. Sheldon  
Falmouth*

## Goings On

### SPECIALS:

THE SUMNER HISTORICAL SOCIETY holds its meetings the last Thursday of each month, at the Universalist Church in West Sumner at 7:30 p.m. Everyone welcome.

### LPL PLUS APL:

GATES OF HEAVEN: documentary film about the grounds of a pet cemetery being sold for a housing project. Sunday, Sept. 27 at Twin Cinema, Promenade Mall, Lewiston, 2 p.m., Admission \$2.00.

NOLAN THE MOLE AND THE MOLAR MYSTERY: a free puppet show created by Puppet Workshop, presented free for children at Multi-Purpose Center, Birch Street, Lewiston, 4 p.m. Tues. Oct. 6.

PUPPET WORKSHOP: in the children's rooms at the Lewiston and Auburn Public Libraries, Weds. Oct. 7. Auburn from 1:00 - 2:30; Lewiston 3:30 - 5:00. Free but limited to first 30 children at each location.

THE LAST METRO: Francois Truffaut's finest film in years; starring Catherine Deneuve. French/English subtitles. Twin Cinema, Promenade Mall, Lewiston, Sun. Oct. 11, 2:00 p.m. Sponsored in cooperation with Le Centre d'Heritage Franco-Americain. Admission \$2.00.

INTERMEZZI ENSEMBLE: present two operatic ensembles, "Husband at the Door" and "Love Apple" by Offenbach, in French (with English text provided); Sts. Peter & Paul Church, Ash Street, Lewiston, 7:30 p.m. Fri. Oct. 16. Admission \$2.00 adults/\$1.00 children.

THE ELEPHANT MAN: film based on the life of John Merrick, a severely handicapped Englishman born in 1874. Sun. Oct. 25, Twin Cinema, 2:00 p.m. Admission \$2.00.

RAPHAEL TRIO: Concert of piano, violin, 'cello, Fri. Oct. 30, United Baptist Church, Main Street, Lewiston, 7:30 p.m. Admission \$2.00 adults/\$1.00 children.

### THEATRE

"TIDEWATER"—THE LIFE AND WORK OF SARAH ORNE JEWETT: A play about one of Maine's own authors, written and directed by Nicholas Durso, starring Beth Dunlap, Susan Poulin, and Millard Fillmore. To be presented at Norway Memorial Library, Thurs. Oct. 8 at 7:30 p.m. Admission Free.

... Page 24    **The Door**

an instant. Willie snapped at Sherby, "We can take that up in the mornin', when things are more private." Ol' Sherb was really flying and he kept on about it, even though, judging from the size of Big Willie, he'd have been smart to think twice about it.

I guess Sherby had been left everything by his mother. He kept talking about how he was going to leave this or that to Willie or Ben, or how Willie could have the old Marlin 30-30 deer rifle that belonged to their father, since he didn't want it. Willie and Benny seemed awfully quiet to me. Spooky quiet. They didn't say a word, just watched Sherby while he talked.

Sherby was rambling all over the place, not making too much sense, but having a good old time talking. When Sherby mentioned the name of Uncle Aldon, both his brothers turned white as sheets and stone-faced silent. It was as if someone had thrown water in their faces. Willie stood up and walked into the kitchen. Benny followed him.

I asked Sherby who Uncle Aldon was. He babbled drunkenly, "I'm shorry kid, I should'n have mentioned it. Nobody in the fam'ly even mentions hish name. He wash my father's brother, 's far 's I know. He inherited ever'thin'—the house, the money, the business when my grandfather died. He disappeared, soon after, without a trace. Th' story was always that m' father killed him, but nobody ever found a body." I was looking right at Sherby, but out of the corner of my eye I saw the door into the kitchen move.

I turned my back on the door and said to Sherby, keeping my voice as low as I could, "How could there not have been a trace of a body, if there was a murder? He must have just gone away or something." The door to the kitchen opened and Willie and Ben came into the room. I asked where the bathroom was and headed down the hall for it, leaving the three brothers talking by the door.

I flipped the light switch at the end of the hall and started for the bathroom. A very old dry sink in the hall caught my eye. I took a closer look. On the back of it was a very unusual ashtray—an off-white color, very old. To me, it looked just like bone—in fact, I thought it looked just

Page 26 ...



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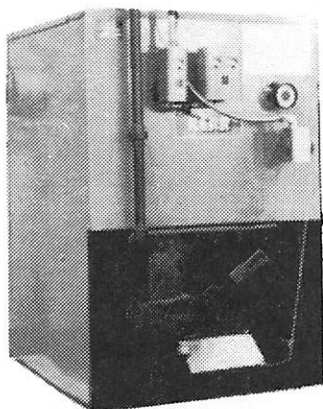
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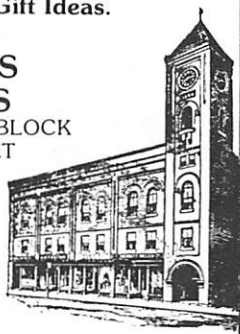
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like a piece of human pelvic bone, like some of the ones we had studied in freshman anatomy. I was holding the ashtray in my hand when I turned and saw Willie, behind me in the hall. He leered at me for a second and then said, "It's the third door on the right." I put the ashtray down and turned into the bathroom.

When I came back into the hall, the ashtray was gone and so was Willie. A bedroom door was open a crack and I saw a small night light burning on a desk. This looked like the master bedroom of the house, and I could see it hadn't been used in years. The room was full of antiques: in the corner was a huge roll-top desk, with rows of pigeon-holes, and piled high with old books. I could see that someone had been sorting through the old lady's things. I picked up an old book with *Willis Preble, 1887* embossed on the front cover in gold. I leafed through it. It was the diary of Willis Preble, and it told of his coming to Squirrel Creek in the 1800's. Willis and Aldon Preble were brothers who came to the U.S. from Northern Ireland. They moved to western Virginia because their uncle had served in that area

under General George Washington during the Revolutionary War. The uncle had been granted land there and he left it to Aldon, the oldest. The uncle died without ever having seen the land.

Aldon and Willis had landed in this country to settle the acreage. Through their hard work and frugal management, they built a substantial estate, acquired a large number of hands, and made a fortune in black market whiskey. The final entry in the diary jumped off the page at me: January 12, 1887. There were brown stains all over the page, like dried blood. "This day, I, Willis Preble, have, in a fit of anger, taken the life of my brother Aldon with my own hands. By the Lord God Almighty, he deserved it. He has been cheating me, his own flesh and blood, these many years. The score is evened. His name shall never again be mentioned in Squirrel Creek. The body shall be disposed of completely, slaughtered as the swine he was, the meat to be used in a stew to feed the hands, the bones to be . . ."

I could feel a hand on my shoulder. I turned to see Willie and Ben behind me, smiling. In Willie's hand was a glass of the clear, white moonshine we had been drinking earlier. Willie said, "Drink this." I tried to push it away, but Willie was much too big, too strong. I drank. Willie said, "It's about time for you to get some rest. Tomorrow we feast. Sherby's cooking in the kitchen now." I could see him turn to Benny and grin. I could feel myself losing consciousness. The room started spinning. I stumbled, then it was as if someone opened a trap door under me. I collapsed in a heap.

\*\*\*\*\*

I can barely open my eyes; they seem cemented shut. Things are still spinning. The only thing I can focus on is the door. I raise myself up to a sitting position, shaking uncontrollably, so cold and drenched with perspiration. There is a sound. The latch moves slowly. I can almost feel the key rasping in the lock . . .

*Keil, owner of the Naples Bootery, is a former professional football player. He is presently a free-lance writer and has had numerous articles printed in BitterSweet*

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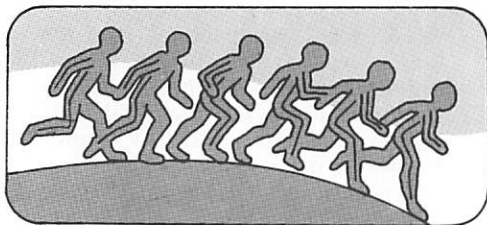
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# Medicine For The Hills

by

Michael A. Lacombe, M.D.

## Update on Arthritis

Arthritis is a symptom of a number of diseases with many causes. It is not a single disease just as fever is not a single disease. Because various diseases manifest themselves as arthritis, much confusion and misunderstanding surrounds painful joints. Since all joint pains do not have the same cause, a definite diagnosis is necessary before one can treat the problem and predict the outcome. A second cause of misunderstanding about arthritis arises from the fact that most forms of arthritis are diseases of ups and downs, exacerbations and remissions, with pain-free periods often unrelated to any form of treatment. It is precisely because of the unpredictable symptom-free periods, which may last for months or years, that many supposed cures for arthritis are proposed. For example, a patient with arthritis may wear copper bracelets, coincidentally begin a period of remission, and thereby be convinced that the bracelets control the disease. Treatment of arthritis is very difficult to evaluate and requires studying large numbers of patients with one form of arthritis over a long period of time.

A third area of confusion about arthritis has to do with the great variability and severity of a given form of arthritis among patients suffering with it. One person with rheumatoid arthritis may have only stiffness of the fingers and mild swelling of the joints, whereas another with the same disease will develop severe joint deformities and disability over the same period of time.

Arthritis is an affliction having many causes, most forms of which have periods of freedom from symptoms, and there is great individual variation in the degree of severity of disease. Most forms of arthritis have no cure. How easy it is to comprehend the vulnerability and frustrations of the patient suffering

from such a whimsical disease. Patients are beguiled with a dazzling array of quackery and with charlatans offering magical lotions, bee venom, manipulative cures, and diet/megavitamin therapy. The squandering of money, time, and hope is profound.

**Rheumatoid arthritis** affects most commonly the smaller joints of the body, for example, the hands, wrists, and feet. Its cause is unknown. The disease produces stiffness in the joints, especially after prolonged inactivity, most commonly a morning stiffness. There is also tenderness and pain on motion in the involved joints. The tissues surrounding the affected joints swell. Usually there is simultaneous involvement of the same joint or group of joints on both sides of the body. Most patients with this disease will develop a specific "rheumatoid factor" to be found on blood testing. This rheumatoid factor is not present in normal people nor in other common forms of arthritis. Later on in the disease there may be typical x-ray findings which can aid in the diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis. In contrast to most other forms of arthritis, this disease has symptoms involving the entire body, that is "constitutional" symptoms of fever, fatigue, lack of appetite, and weight loss.

Early in the course of rheumatoid arthritis, the patient will have stiffness, joint swelling, involvement of the small joints in a symmetrical fashion, but no x-ray findings and probably no rheumatoid factor to be found in the blood. The diagnosis at this point in the disease process is an educated guess. It is during this cloudy, uncertain period of the disease that many patients may be branded as having rheumatoid arthritis, when in fact they do not, and therefore may be "cured" of a disease they never had.

What is the prognosis for patients

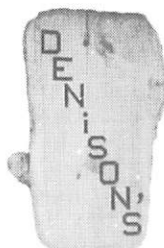
with rheumatoid arthritis? Though this is often referred to as the crippling kind of arthritis, in fact only about ten percent of patients with it become completely incapacitated after ten to fifteen years of this disease, and over fifty percent of patients remain fully employed. Ten to twenty percent of patients with rheumatoid arthritis experience an extended period of complete absence of disease symptoms. Those patients who have episodic flare-ups and only partial remissions usually have a gradual progression of deformity and disability. Those few whose disease is unremitting may become completely disabled within a few years of the onset of the disease. The deformities and the disability are the result of loss of joint cartilage with freezing of the joints and destruction of tendons and ligaments with subsequent dislocation of joints, and deformity. In a few patients, destruction of small arteries can result in skin changes and organ damage. Although it is difficult to predict the outcome of a given patient, those with very high amounts of rheumatoid factor, with certain skin changes, with sustained unremitting disease of over a year, with onset of disease before the age of thirty, and with systemic symptoms, tend to have a poorer prognosis.

The natural reaction to having a disease with unpredictable flare-ups and periods of remission, is one of depression and desperation. These patients do become desperate, to the amount of \$500 million per year spent on arthritis gimmicks. Because of the nature of the disease, the patient is a set-up for "secret formula arthritis cures," "orthomolecular diets," and "miraculous electronic devices." The arthritis victim who has a temporary remission by coincidence just when he is trying something special from the quack becomes a believer, and worse, a preaching convert. These people develop the notion that the medical profession is either ignorant of, or deliberately withholding effective therapy for some diabolical purpose or personal gain.

There is effective treatment for rheumatoid arthritis, treatment which can alter the course of the disease and diminish the resulting disability. The tragedy is that time and money are wasted on quackery

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while joint destruction continues. One should consider critically anyone who offers special or secret formulas or diets for curing arthritis. The quack accuses the medical profession of persecuting or misunderstanding him, will advertise quick and easy cures, and will spurn drugs as unnecessary poisons to the body. There are no easy answers for rheumatoid arthritis, and there is no cure. Avoid the quack.

**(next month: Treatment of  
Rheumatoid Arthritis)**



## OCTOBER, RETURNED HOME

The cool harvest of October  
Amazes me; (I have been away these  
years,

Torn from October and her wailing  
progeny).

Our pond aligns with the sky  
In a wisdom of pale blue; the winds  
Come up confidently in a potence of  
form

Carrying them above and through  
the earth,

Dying finally, breathless. Whereupon  
The earth tosses and turns in sleep.

*David M. Carew  
South Casco*

## ECCLESIASTES LOST

The growing things have had  
their day

They nodded, whispered,  
Threw perfume  
Labored fruit  
And scattered seed  
Almost with a tired sigh  
They bent and sank from view.

In hardened confines of the earth  
The seeds are passive,  
Sleeping,  
A hush replaced the growing  
A silence of months  
Encircles movement.

In the nature of things it is a time  
For dormancy, to  
Protect the inner members  
But man—  
Is he in the nature of things?

*Lila S.  
Norway*

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# The End Of The Cumberland & Oxford Canal.

Near Kemp Lock there is a back-water area resembling a small pond. Here there are several boats that have been secured for the day. They all are carrying the standard cargo for boats returning from Portland—rum, molasses, and dried codfish. To the right is a long stretch of fields leading up to the Babb Farm. It is a picturesque sight during haying season to see the mowers rapidly working their way down a field—a dozen men, swinging their scythes in unison, hastening to reach the bank of the canal where they will rest and most likely be treated with as much rum as they can hold from the cargo of one or more of the boats. Rested and thoroughly refreshed, they once again take up their scythes and begin working their way toward the distant farm at a more leisurely pace. In fact, as one might suspect, there is often a noticeable irregularity in the cadence of their swings. Most of old Babb's haying crews are comprised of transient laborers, ever on the move in quest of that elusive pot of gold at the end of a rainbow.

On a gentle slope near the Babb Farm there is a flock of sheep, resembling whitecaps on a pea-green sea.

Just before reaching Kemp Lock, you are surprised to see a new covered bridge spanning the river. It has just been constructed; it's an improvement over the crude bridge that was there when you made the trip ten years ago on the *Martha Washington*. The road linked by the bridge is called Hurricane Road. There are a few old timers about who recall the hurricane back in 1767 that wiped out

the bridge that had been there where the new covered bridge now stands. That was back in the days when the land belonged to the English King George III. It was about that time when settlers were really beginning to move into the area. Since Wolf had bested Montcalm up on the Plains of Abraham, folks could stop worrying about the St. Francis Indians led by French officers sweeping down upon them. They weren't long clearing the land hereabouts, building homes, and turning to the business of farming and rearing large families.

Approaching the small settlement of Newhall, the *Ethel* actually utilizes a small stretch of Gambo Pond before entering Gambo Lock. A sort of hush comes over the crew. The stone structures below the locks are a part of the Oriental Powder Mill that located here to utilize the canal—a relatively safe means of transporting explosives. Certainly it beats having a dangerous cargo jolting about in wagons over rough roads. Workers, with an almost fatalistic demeanor, are nonchalantly loading several of the company boats.

"Don't any of these boats ever blow up?" you ask the captain.

"They say one did. It's a wonder more don't the way them damn fools handle that stuff. More'n once there's been an explosion that's blowed the hell outa the towpath and the men too. You'd think to Gawd them fools would be more careful!"

Just then two workers nefariously threaten to toss a keg on the *Ethel*'s deck.

"Now look-a there! See what I be sayin'?" added the captain as he

turned livid and began shaking his fists at the pranksters. "Blow yourselves up, you damn fools, if you want," he shouted, "but let us, for Gawd's sake, get to hell outa here in one piece!"

Everyone breathes a sigh of relief as the *Ethel* is towed out of sight of the mill; tranquility reigns supreme once again.

Near Little Falls two girls lean out of a window of a house built on the very edge of the canal wall. They wave their handkerchiefs and the two young crew members flourish their arms and cast friendly smiles up at them. It seems that it is not just salt-water sailors who have girls in every port.

By the time the *Ethel* is lowered through the two Mallison locks at a place referred to locally as Horsebeef Falls on the Gorham side of the Presumpscot River, it has passed through nineteen locks (twenty, counting the lock up on the Songo). It seems as though the *Ethel* just gets started down a long stretch of canal when it rounds a bend and there is another set of locks. At least you get a chance to stretch your legs frequently, partake of food and drink, and catch up on the local happenings. More than once there has been a fistfight or out-and-out brawl similar to the one that occurred up at Great Falls. The trip thus far down the canal has been slow, but most certainly it has not been tedious.

Once through the Lower Mallison Lock, seven miles of easy travelling lie ahead—seven miles without a single lock! The farms are larger and more prosperous looking. There are



Babb Bridge near Upper Kemp Lock



Remains of the Oriental Powder Mill

broad expanses of cleared land on either side of the canal which seem to extend to the very rim of the horizon. The wheat, oats, barley, and rye are like a sea of golden waves being swept along by gusts of wind. In a large field to the right the wheat is being harvested. Reapers seem to be effortlessly swinging their scythes in a steady rhythm that is almost mesmerizing to watch.

The *Ethel* is approaching the Little Falls Aqueduct, considered locally as a paragon of engineering achievement. The aqueduct enables the boats to pass above the Little River. The autumn rains have not set in and the Little River flows pacifically beneath the aqueduct where it will soon join the waters of the Presumpscot. But after the heavy rains, the Little River will be suddenly transformed into a raging torrent that threatens to sweep everything within its path toward the swollen Presumpscot.

The trough which the *Ethel* is about to enter is 10 feet wide and three and a half feet deep. The driver is having trouble with his horse that seems suddenly to have become recalcitrant; and, for the moment at least, is unwilling to enter the walkway. The huge animal rears up and entangles the traces with the whiffletree. The driver is patience personified. He steadies his steed, straightens out the traces, and the *Ethel* glides through the trough with no further incident. It is, however, consoling to observe that there is a sturdy rail to prevent any possibility of the horse and perhaps the driver suddenly plummeting into the river below.

Except for the temporary difficulty that the driver had with the horse at the entrance of the Little River Aqueduct, the seven-mile trek known as "Long Level" is uneventful and

almost somnolent in the early afternoon sun.

You are startled out of your drowsiness by the sound of the captain's horn. The *Ethel* is about to enter the first in a series of seven locks that it will pass through in the next mile before reaching tidewater. It is the slowest mile of the entire trip. You need to stretch your legs so you welcome the opportunity to stroll at leisure along the towpath. Even though you pause frequently to chat with passersby, you still arrive at the lock on the edge of an expanse of saltwater marsh ahead of the *Ethel*.

Several men are harvesting the marsh hay. They are stacking the hay on racks elevated high enough so that the hay will be above the surface of the water at high tide. When the first cold breath of winter transforms the marshland into a frozen tundra, the men will return with a horse-drawn sled to gather up the marsh hay. The horses will be wearing large wooden shoes specifically designed to prevent the heavy animals from sinking down in soft areas.

Once again you board the *Ethel*. Across Fore River in Stroudwater, the George Tate Mansion sits majestically on a hill and surveys the river, the canal, and the bustling activity generated by several mills along the banks of this river powered by tidal waters. Old George Tate made a fortune in the mast industry before the Revolutionary War.

Since your business is down on Portland's busy waterfront, you will remain aboard the *Ethel* instead of disembarking on the wharfs at the Turning Basin where there are a number of boats either unloading or loading up for a journey to the hinterland. The area is pulsating with activity.

The *Ethel* proceeds down Thompson's Point and through Lower Guard Lock which, like its sister lock at the entrance to Sebago, has gates made of granite slabs.

It is late Wednesday afternoon as the *Ethel* is secured to a dock on the Portland waterfront where its cargo will be unloaded and replaced with rum, molasses, codfish, and a variety of other goods for the merchants of Harrison and the towns beyond. With luck, you can transact your business in time to return to Harrison before Sunday.

From the very first year the canal seemed destined to fulfill the aspirations of its founders. Nearly a hundred canal boats utilized the canal the first year; at its zenith there were over one hundred and fifty registered boats operating there. Although no dividends were ever paid, there were several years when the canal paid an amount that exceeded the total operating cost plus interest on its construction. Certainly the canal stimulated the economic growth of Cumberland and Oxford counties. One can only speculate on the amount of income countless individuals derived directly or indirectly from the canal. Even in the final year of its operation, it has been recorded that Lewis P. Crockett of Portland (said to have been the last man to navigate any part of the canal) and his father cleared over seventy dollars in one week by carrying a load of wood for the schools on the islands in Casco Bay and returning with a hundred tons of coal to the lake district. Seventy dollars was a sizeable amount of money in those days.

Toll rates varied according to the nature of the cargo. For example, it



Approximate site of first of locks—Westbrook



Overgrown canal in Stroudwater

cost three mills per mile to ship a barrel of apples, three cents per mile for a cord of firewood, and five cents a ton per mile for powder. A flat sum of seven dollars was charged for a load of spars and masts. It was mandatory for all boats plying the canal to be registered at the office of the Collector of Tolls.

In addition to mismanagement, a series of events occurred beyond the scope of the most perspicacious that sent revenues plummeting. One of these events was the construction of the Atlantic & St. Lawrence Railroad (Canadian National) through several towns in Oxford County that heretofore had utilized the canal. The loss of revenue to the new railroad was considerable and was instrumental in causing the canal company to default on its interest payments, resulting in the sale of the canal for \$40,000 to Isaac Dyer, a lumber magnate with interests in several other states as well as Canada. He immediately sold half his interest in the canal to Francis O. J. Smith, a leading figure in the history of Maine between 1820 and 1870. Smith, a brilliant lawyer who practiced at Murrel's Corner, gave valuable assistance to Morse in rendering operable his invention of the telegraph; and played a significant role in building the first telegraph lines. One of his major ambitions was to supply Portland with water from Sebago Lake. Dyer's ambitions, of course, lay primarily with the further development of the region's lumber industry.

The outbreak of the Civil War dampened their ambitions. Badly needed repairs on the canal could not be made. However, it was finally the construction of the Portland and Ogunburg Railroad (White Mountain Line of the Maine Central) linking Portland with Burlington, Vermont, via Sebago Lake that sounded the death knell for the canal. And, despite several schemes to utilize the canal, it was closed forever in 1870.

As a sentimental lover of the romantic days when one could travel at a maximum speed of four miles per hour on a canal, I inevitably become engulfed in waves of nostalgia each time I see vestiges of the Cumberland and Oxford Canal. As a youth growing up on the shores of Sebago Lake, I enjoyed playing on the decaying hulks of old canal boats at

the mouth of Muddy River. I have shed tears over the bleaching skeletons along the Songo and Jordan's Bay. The *Ethel* was a real boat (although constructed later than 1840 which is the random date for the imaginary journey from Harrison to Portland) that rotted away for years at a dock in Naples. In my way of thinking, it was America's obsession for speed and impressive machines that prompted us in part to turn away from the canals and propelled us into the railroad craze. Bulk items can be shipped more cheaply by water. Western Europe continues to use a network of canals and rivers to transport such bulk items as oil, coal, grain, and iron.

At any length, for those who would like to turn back the hands of time and spend a few halcyon hours barging on a canal and cannot afford a trip to Europe, they can journey to Georgetown outside of Washington, D.C., and travel on a boat towed by mules along the old Chesapeake and Ohio. However, it seems unfortunate that we are unable to recapture in part the days so long ago and take a journey on the colorful Cumberland and Oxford Canal.

**Author's Acknowledgement:** *I wish to express appreciation for the kind assistance of the Maine Historical Society and Hall Sawyer, Jr., of South Windham for providing me with much of the material and assistance that enabled me to write this work on the Cumberland and Oxford Canal. A Guide to the Cumberland & Oxford Canal, written and illustrated by Ernest H. Knight of the Cumberland & Oxford Canal Association, has been an indispensable source of information for my work of fiction.*

*Above all, I would like to voice my lasting gratitude to Herbert G. Jones, whom I knew as a neighbor when I first moved back to Maine and lived at North Sebago. His lovely book Sebago Lake Land should never be out of print.*

*Although much of this work is fictional and the narration has been presented as if you the reader are actually making the trip, I have endeavored to provide the narrative with as much verisimilitude as possible and still exercise a certain degree of "poetical license."*

Jack C. Barnes

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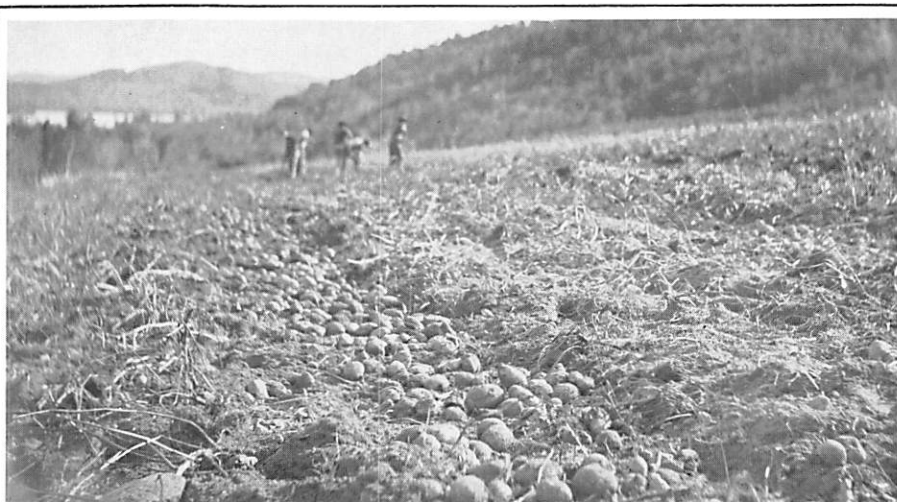
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## Can You Place It?

Last month's *Can You Place It* was unidentified. The unusual architectural specimen was a rear view of the Grange Hall at Leeds, Maine.

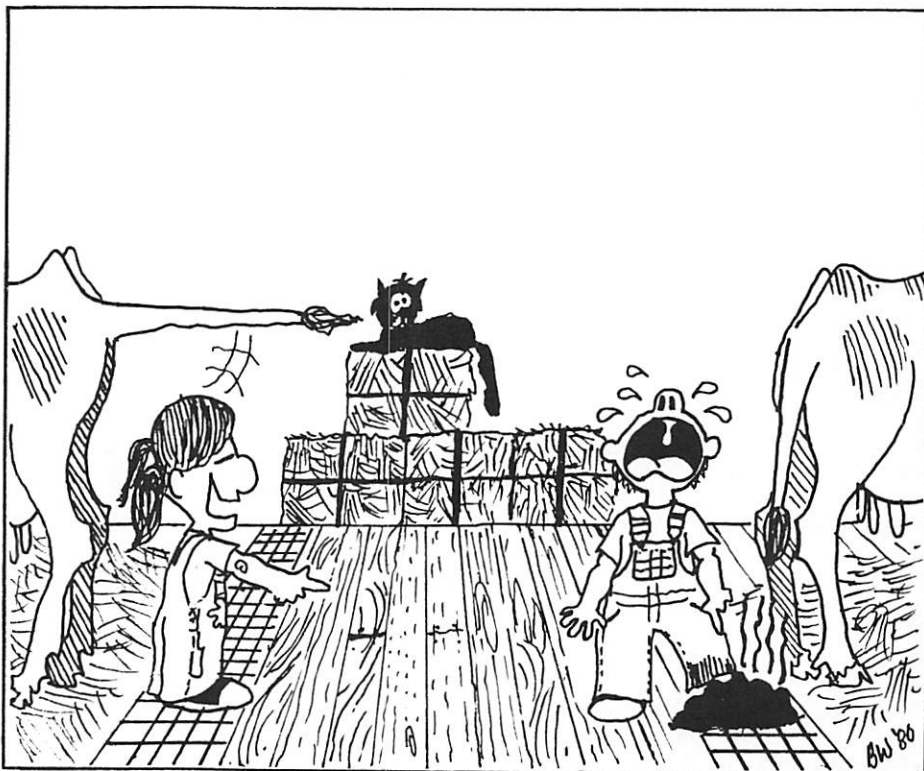
Clifford Dubey of Norway sent us a letter about the August photo: "(It) was taken at the head of Main Street above Ryan's Trading Post, on the right side

of the outlet of Pennesseewassee. Stephenson's canoe shop was at the left of the picture above the two canoes. John Raymond, Don Twitchell, George Andrews' homes now occupy the area of the barn in the background, and the field above to the woods of Ordway Grove next to the water. The building with OBELISK on the roof was used to store small boats. Hortense Gates and George Morgan were two of the people who used it to house their canoes."

If you recognize this month's spot, write us at P. O. Box 6, Norway, ME 04268.

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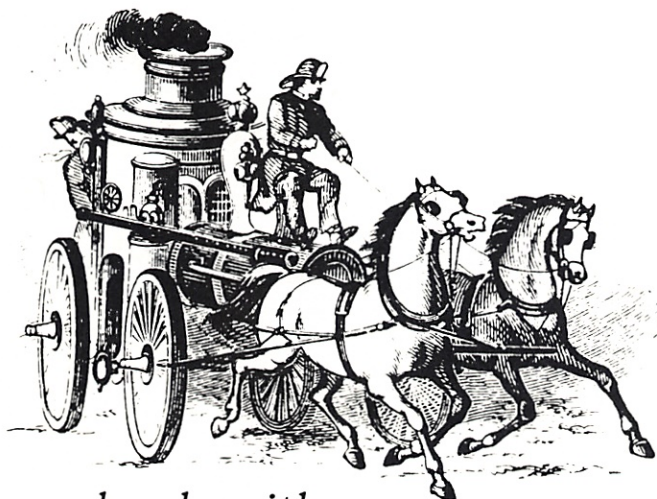
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